

THE
H I S T O R Y
OF A
F O U N D L I N G.

VOLUME THE FOURTH.

BOOK XIV.

CONTAINING TWO DAYS.

CHAP. I.

AN ESSAY TO PROVE THAT AN
AUTHOR WILL WRITE THE BET-
TER, FOR HAVING SOME KNOW-
LEDGE OF THE SUBJECT ON
WHICH HE WRITES.



Several gentlemen, in these times, by the wonderful force of genius only, without the least assistance of learning, perhaps, without being well able to read, have made a considerable figure in the republick of letters; the modern critics, I am told, have lately begun to assert, that all kind of learning is entirely useless to a writer; and, indeed, no other than a kind of fetters on the natural sprightliness and activity of the imagination, which is thus weighed down, and prevented from soaring to those high flights, which otherwise it would be able to reach.

This doctrine, I am afraid, is, at present, carried much too far: for why should writing differ so much

from all other arts? The nimbleness of a dancing-master is not at all prejudiced, by being taught to move; nor doth any mechanick, I believe, exercise his tools the worse, by knowing how to use them. For my own part, I cannot conceive that Homer or Virgil would have wrote with more fire, if, instead of being masters of all the learning of their times, they had really been as ignorant as most of the authors of the present age. Nor do I believe that all the imagination, fire, and judgment of Pitt, could have produced those orations that have made the senate of England, in these our times, a rival in eloquence to Greece and Rome, if he had not been so well read in the writings of Demosthenes and Cicero, as to have transfused their whole spirit into his speeches; and with their spirit, their knowledge too.

I would not here be understood to insist on the same fund of learning in any of my brethren, as Cicero persuades us is necessary to the composition of an orator. On the contrary, very little reading is, I conceive, necessary to the poet; less to the critic; and the least of all to the politician.

For the first, perhaps, Bysshe's Art of Poetry, and a few of our modern poets, may suffice; for the second, a moderate heap of plays; and, for the last, an indifferent collection of political journals.

To say the truth, I require no more than that a man should have some little knowledge of the subject on which he treats; according to the old maxim of law, *Quam quisque noris artem in eâ se exerceat*. With this alone, a writer may sometimes do tolerably well; and, indeed, without this, all the other learning in the world will stand him in little stead.

For instance, let us suppose that Homer and Virgil, Aristotle and Cicero, Thucydides and Livy, could have met all together, and have clubbed their talents, to have composed a Treatise on the Art of Dancing; I believe it will be readily agreed, they could not have equalled the excellent treatise which Mr. Essex hath given us on that subject, entitled, *The Rudiments of genteel Education*. And, indeed, should the excellent Mr. Broughton be prevailed on to set fist to paper, and to compleat the above-said rudiments, by delivering down the true principles of athleticks, I question whether the world will have any cause to lament, that none of the great writers, either ancient or modern, have ever treated about that noble and useful art.

To avoid a multiplicity of examples in so plain a case, and to come at once to my point, I am apt to conceive, that one reason why many English writers have totally failed in describing the manners of upper life, may possibly be, that in reality they know nothing of it.

This is a knowledge unhappily not in the power of many authors to arrive at. Books will give us a very imperfect idea of it; nor will the stage, a much better: the fine gentleman, formed upon reading the former, will almost always turn out a pedant; and he who forms himself upon the latter, a coxcomb.

Nor are the characters drawn from these models better supported. Vanbrugh and Congreve copied nature; but they who copy them, draw as unlike the present age, as Hogarth would do, if he was to paint a rout or a drum

in the dresses of Titian and Vandyke. In short, imitation here will not do the business: the picture must be after Nature herself. A true knowledge of the world is gained only by conversation; and the manners of every rank must be seen, in order to be known.

Now it happens, that this higher order of mortals is not to be seen, like all the rest of the human species, for nothing, in the streets, shops, and coffee-houses: nor are they shewn like the upper rank of animals, for so much a piece. In short, this is a sight to which no persons are admitted, without one or other of these qualifications, viz. either birth or fortune, or what is equivalent to both—the honourable profession of a gamester. And, very unluckily for the world, persons so qualified, very seldom care to take upon themselves the bad trade of writing; which is generally entered upon by the lower and poorer sort, as it is a trade which many think requires no kind of stock to set up with.

Hence those strange monsters in lace and embroidery, in silks and brocades, with vast wigs and hoops; which, under the name of lords and ladies, strut the stage, to the great delight of attorneys and their clerks in the pit; and of the citizens and their apprentices in the galleries; and which are no more to be found in real life, than the centaur, the chimera, or any other creature of mere fiction. But, to let my reader into a secret, this knowledge of upper life, though very necessary for the preventing mistakes, is no very great resource to a writer whose province is comedy; or that kind of novels, which, like this I am writing, is of the comick class.

What Mr. Pope says of women, is very applicable to most in this station, who are, indeed, so entirely made up of form and affectation, that they have no character at all; at least, none which appears. I will venture to say, the highest life is much the dullest, and affords very little humour or entertainment. The various callings in lower spheres produce the great variety of humorous characters; whereas here, except among the few who are engaged in the pursuit of ambition, and the fewer still who have a relish for pleasure, all is vanity and servile

servile imitation. Dressing and cards, eating and drinking, bowing and curtsying, make up the business of their lives.

Some there are, however, of this rank, upon whom Passion exercises it's tyranny, and hurries them far beyond the bounds which decorum prescribes; of these, the ladies are as much distinguished by their noble intrepidity, and a certain superior contempt of reputation, from the frail ones of meaner degree; as a virtuous woman of quality is, by the elegance and delicacy of her sentiments, from the honest wife of a yeoman or shop-keeper. Lady Bellafton was of this intrepid character; but let not my country readers conclude from her, that this is the general conduct of women of fashion, or that we mean to represent them as such. They might as well suppose, that every clergyman was represented by Thwackum, or every soldier by Ensign Northerton.

There is not, indeed, a greater error, than that which universally prevails among the vulgar; who, borrowing their opinion from some ignorant satirists, have affixed the character of lewdness to these times. On the contrary, I am convinced there never was less of love intrigue carried on among persons of condition, than now. Our present women have been taught by their mothers, to fix their thoughts only on ambition and vanity, and to despise the pleasures of love, as unworthy their regard; and being afterwards, by the care of such mothers, married without having husbands, they seem pretty well confirmed in the justness of those sentiments; whence they content themselves, for the dull remainder of life, with the pursuit of more innocent, but, I am afraid, more childish amusements; the bare mention of which would ill suit with the dignity of this history. In my humble opinion, the true characteristick of the present beau monde, is rather folly than vice; and the only epithet which it deserves is, that of Frivolous.

CHAP. II.

CONTAINING LETTERS AND OTHER MATTERS WHICH ATTEND AMOURS.

JONES had not long been at home, before he received the following letter.

I Was never more surprized, than when I found you was gone. When you left the room, I little imagined you intended to have left the house without seeing me again. Your behaviour is all of a piece, and convinces me how much I ought to despise a heart which can doat upon an idiot; though I know not whether I should not admire her cunning more than her simplicity: wonderful both! for though she understood not a word of what passed between us, she yet had the skill, the assurance, the——what shall I call it? to deny to my face, that she knows you, or ever saw you before! Was this a scheme laid between you? and have you been base enough to betray me? O how I despise her, you, and all the world, but chiefly myself! for—I dare not write what I should afterwards run mad to read; but, remember, I can detest as violently as I have loved!

Jones had but little time given him, to reflect on this letter, before a second was brought him from the same hand; and this, likewise, we shall set down in the precise words.

WHEN you consider the hurry of spirits in which I must have writ, you cannot be surprized at any expressions in my former note: yet, perhaps, on reflection, they were rather too warm. At least, I would, if possible, think all owing to the odious playhouse, and to the impertinence of a fool, which detained me beyond my appointment. How easy is it to think well of those we love! Perhaps you desire I should think so. I have resolved to see you to-night; so come to me immediately.

P. S. I have ordered to be at home to none but yourself.

P. S. Mr. Jones will imagine I shall assist him in his defence; for I believe he cannot desire to impose on me, more than I desire to impose on myself.

P. S. Come immediately.

To

To the men of intrigue I refer the determination, whether the angry or the tender letter gave the greatest uneasiness to Jones. Certain it is, he had no violent inclination to pay any more visits that evening, unless to one single person. However, he thought his honour engaged; and had not this been motive sufficient, he would not have ventured to blow the temper of Lady Bellafton into that flame of which he had reason to think it fufceptible, and of which he feared the confequence might be a difcovery to Sophia, which he dreaded. After fome difcontented walks, therefore, about the room, he was preparing to depart, when the lady kindly prevented him, not by another letter, but by her own prefence. She entered the room very difordered in her drefs, and very difcompos'd in her looks, and threw herfelf into a chair; where having recovered her breath, ſhe ſaid, 'You lee, Sir, when women have gone one length too far, they will ſtop at none. If any perfon would have ſworn this to me a week ago, I would not have believed it of myſelf.'—'I hope, Madam,' ſaid Jones, 'my charming Lady Bellafton will be as difficult to believe any thing againſt one who is fo fenſible of the many obligations ſhe hath conferred upon him.'—'Indeed!' ſays ſhe; 'fenſible of obligations! Did I expect to hear ſuch cold language from Mr. Jones?'—'Pardon me, my dear angel,' ſaid he, 'if after the letters I have received, the terrors of your anger, though I know not how I have deſerved it.'—'And have I then,' ſays ſhe with a ſmile, 'ſo angry a countenance? have I really brought a chiding face with me?'—'If there be honour in man,' ſaid he, 'I have done nothing to merit your anger. You remember the appointment you ſent me—I went in purſuance.'—'I beſeech you,' cried ſhe, 'do not run through the odious recital—Answer me but one queſtion, and I ſhall be eaſy; have you not betrayed my honour to her?' Jones fell upon his knees, and began to utter the moſt violent proteſtations—when Partridge came dancing and capering into the room, like one drunk with joy, crying out, 'She's found! ſhe's found! Here, Sir, here; ſhe's here! Mrs. Honour is upon the ſtairs.'—'Stop her a moment,' cries Jones.

'Here, Madam, ſtep behind the bed, I have no other room nor cloſet, nor place on earth to hide you in. Sure never was ſo damn'd an accident!'—'D—n'd indeed!' ſaid the lady, as ſhe went to her place of concealment: and preſently afterwards in came Mrs. Honour. 'Hey-day!' ſaid ſhe, 'Mr. Jones, what's the matter? That impudent rascal, your ſervant, would ſcarce let me come up ſtairs. I hope he hath not the ſame reaſon now to keep me from you, as he had at Upton. I ſuppoſe you hardly expected to ſee me; but you have certainly bewitched my lady. Poor dear young lady! To be ſure, I loves her as tenderly as if ſhe was my own ſiſter. Lord have mercy upon you, if you don't make her a good huſband! and to be ſure, if you do not, nothing can be bad enough for you.' Jones begged her only to whiſper, for that there was a lady dying in the next room. 'A lady!' cries ſhe; 'ay, I ſuppoſe one of your ladies. O Mr. Jones, there are too many of them in the world; I believe we are got into the houſe of one; for my Lady Bellafton, I daſt to ſay, is no better than ſhe ſhould be.'—'Huſh! huſh!' cries Jones; 'every word is overheard in the next room.'—'I don't care a farthing,' cries Honour, 'I ſpeaks no ſcandal of any one; but, to be ſure, the ſervants makes no ſcruple of ſaying as how her ladyſhip meets men at another place—where the houſe goes under the name of a poor gentlewoman; but her ladyſhip pays the rent, and many's the good thing beſides, they ſay, ſhe hath of her.' Here Jones, after expreſſing the utmoſt uneaſineſs, offered to ſtop her mouth. 'Hey-day! why, ſure Mr. Jones, you will let me ſpeak; I ſpeaks no ſcandal, for I only ſays what I heard from others—and, thinks I to myſelf, much good may it do the gentlewoman with her riches, if ſhe comes by it in ſuch a wicked manner. To be ſure, it is better to be poor and honeſt.'—'The ſervants are villains,' cries Jones, 'and abuſe their lady unjuſtly.'—'Ay, to be ſure, ſervants are always villains; and ſo my lady ſays, and won't hear a word of it.'—'No, I am convinced,' ſays Jones, 'my Sophia is above liſtning to ſuch baſe ſcandal.'—'Nay, I believe it is no ſcandal neither,' ſays ſhe.

'ther,' cries Honour; 'for why should she meet men at another house? It can never be for any good: for if she had a lawful design of being courted, as to be sure any lady may lawfully give her company to men upon that account; why, where can be the sense—' 'I protest,' cries Jones, 'I can't hear all this of a lady of such honour, and a relation of Sophia; besides, you will distract the poor lady in the next room—Let me intrude you to walk with me down stairs.'—'Nay, Sir, if you won't let me speak, I have done—Here, Sir, is a letter from my young lady—what would some men give to have this! But, Mr. Jones, I think you are not over and above generous; and yet I have heard some servants say—but I am sure you will do me the justice to own, I never saw the colour of your money.' Here Jones hastily took the letter, and presently after slipped five pieces into her hand. He then returned a thousand thanks to his dear Sophia in a whisper, and begged her to leave him to read her letter: she presently departed, not without expressing much grateful sense of his generosity.

Lady Bellafton now came from behind the curtain. How shall I describe her rage? Her tongue was at first incapable of utterance; but streams of fire darted from her eyes; and well, indeed, they might, for her heart was all in a flame. And now, as soon as her voice found way, instead of expressing any indignation against Honour, or her own servants, she began to attack poor Jones. 'You see,' said she, 'what I have sacrificed to you! my reputation, my honour—gone for ever! And what return have I found! Neglected, slighted, for a country girl, for an idiot!'—'What neglect, Madam, or what slight,' cries Jones, 'have I been guilty of?'—'Mr. Jones,' said she, 'it is in vain to dissemble; if you will make me easy, you must entirely give her up; and as a proof of your intention, shew me the letter.'—'What letter, Madam?' says Jones. 'Nay, surely,' says she, 'you cannot have the confidence to deny your having received a letter by the hands of that trollop?'—'And can your ladyship,' cries he, 'ask of me what I must part with my honour before I grant? Have I acted in such a man-

ner by your ladyship? Could I be guilty of betraying this poor innocent girl to you, what security could you have, that I should not act the same part by yourself? A moment's reflection will, I am sure, convince you, that a man with whom the secrets of a lady are not safe, must be the most contemptible of wretches.'—'Very well,' said she; 'I need not insist on your becoming this contemptible wretch in your own opinion; for the inside of the letter could inform me of nothing more than I know already. I see the footing you are upon.' Here ensued a long conversation, which the reader, who is not too curious, will thank me for not inserting at length. It shall suffice, therefore, to inform him, that Lady Bellafton grew more and more pacified, and at length believed, or affected to believe, his protestations—that his meeting with Sophia that evening was merely accidental, and every other matter which the reader already knows; and which, as Jones set before her in the strongest light, it is plain that she had in reality no reason to be angry with him.

She was not, however, in her heart perfectly satisfied with his refusal to shew her the letter; so deaf are we to the clearest reason, when it argues against our prevailing passions. She was, indeed, well convinced that Sophia possessed the first place in Jones's affections; and yet, haughty and amorous as this lady was, she submitted at last to bear the second place; or to express it more properly in a legal phrase, was contented with the *possession* of that of which another woman had the *reversion*.

It was at length agreed, that Jones should for the future visit at the house, for that Sophia, her maid, and all the servants, would place these visits to the account of Sophia; and that she herself would be considered as the person imposed upon.

This scheme was contrived by the lady, and highly relished by Jones; who was, indeed, glad to have a prospect of seeing his Sophia at any rate; and the lady herself was not a little pleased with the imposition on Sophia; which Jones, she thought, could not possibly discover to her, for his own sake.

The

The next day was appointed for the first visit; and then, after proper ceremonies, the Lady Bellafton returned home.

CHAP. III.

CONTAINING VARIOUS MATTERS.

JONES was no sooner alone, than he eagerly broke open his letter, and read as follows.

SIR,

IT is impossible to exprefs what I have fuffered fince you left this houfe; and as I have reafon to think you intend coming here again, I have fent Honour, though fo late at night, as fhe tells me fhe knows your lodgings, to prevent you. I charge you, by all the regard you have for me, not to think of vifiting here; for it will certainly be difcovered: nay, I almoft doubt, from fome things which have dropp'd from her ladyfhip, that fhe is not already without fome fufpicion. Something favourable, perhaps, may happen; we muft wait with patience; but I once more intreat you, if you have any concern for my eafe, do not think of returning hither.

This letter adminiftered the fame kind of confolation to poor Jones, which Job formerly received from his friends. Befides difappointing all the hopes which he promifed to himfelf from feeing Sophia, he was reduced to an unhappy dilemma, with regard to Lady Bellafton; for there are fome certain engagements, which, as he well knew, do very difficultly admit of any excufe for the failure; and to go, after the ftrict prohibition from Sophia, he was not to be forced by any human power. At length, after much deliberation, which, during that night, fupplied the place of fleep, he determined to feign himfelf fick: for this fuggelted itfelf as the only means of failing the appointed vifit, without incenfing Lady Bellafton; which he had more than one reafon of defiring to avoid.

The firft thing, however, which he did in the morning was, to write an answer to Sophia, which he inclofed in

one to Honour. He then difpatched another to Lady Bellafton, containing the above-mentioned excufe: and to this he foon received the following answer.

I Am vexed that I cannot fee you here this afternoon, but more concerned for the occafion: take great care of yourfelf, and have the beft advice; and I hope there will be no danger, I am fo tormented all this morning with fools, that I have fcarce a moment's time to write to you. Adieu,

P. S. I will endeavour to call on you this evening at nine. Be fure to be alone.

Mr. Jones now received a vifit from Mrs. Miller; who, after fome formal introduction, began the following fpeech. I am very forry, Sir, to wait upon you on fuch an occafion; but I hope you will confider the ill confequence which it muft be to the reputation of my poor girls, if my houfe fhould once be talked of as a houfe of ill-fame. I hope you won't think me therefore, guilty of impertinence, if I beg you not to bring any more ladies in at that time of night. The clock had ftruck two before one of them went away.—“I do affure you, Madam,” faid Jones, “the lady who was here laft night, and who ftaid the lateft (for the other only brought me a letter) is a woman of very great fafhion, and my near relation.”—“I don't know what fafhion fhe is of,” answered Mrs. Miller, “but I am fure no woman of virtue, unlefs a very near relation indeed, would vifit a young gentleman at ten at night, and ftay four hours in his room with him alone; befides, Sir, the behaviour of her chairmen fhews what fhe was; for they did nothing but make jefts all the evening in the entry; and asked Mr. Partridge, in the hearing of my own maid, if Madam intended to ftay with his mafter all night; with a great deal of ftuff not proper to be repeated. I have really a great refpect for you, Mr. Jones, upon your own account; nay, I have a very high obligation to you for your generofity to my coufin: indeed, I did not know how very good you had been till lately. Little did I imagine to what dreadful courfes the poor man's diftrefs

distress had driven him. Little did I think, when you gave me the ten guineas, that you had given them to a highwayman! O Heavens! what goodness have you shewn! How have you preserved this family! The character which Mr. Allworthy hath formerly given me of you, was, I find, strictly true: and, indeed, if I had no obligation to you, my obligations to him are such, that, on his account, I should shew you the utmost respect in my power. Nay, believe me, dear Mr. Jones, if my daughters and my own reputation were out of the case, I should, for your own sake, be sorry that so pretty a young gentleman should converse with these women; but if you are resolved to do it, I must beg you to take another lodging; for I do not myself like to have such things carried on under my roof; but more especially upon the account of my girls, who have little, Heaven knows, besides their characters to recommend them. Jones started, and changed colour, at the name of Allworthy. 'Indeed, Mrs. Miller,' answered he, a little warmly, 'I do not take this at all kind. I will never bring any slander on your house; but I must insist on seeing what company I please in my own room; and if that gives you any offence, I shall, as soon as I am able, look for another lodging.'—'I am sorry we must part then, Sir,' said she; 'but I am convinced Mr. Allworthy himself would never come within my doors, if he had the least suspicion of my keeping an ill house.'—'Very well, Madam,' said Jones. 'I hope, Sir, said she, 'you are not angry; for I would not for the world offend any of Mr. Allworthy's family. I have not slept a wink all night about this matter.'—'I am sorry I have disturbed your rest, Madam,' said Jones; 'but I beg you will send Partridge up to me immediately: which she promised to do, and then, with a very low curtsey, retired.

As soon as Partridge arrived, Jones fell upon him in the most outrageous manner. 'How often,' said he, 'am I to suffer for your folly, or rather, for my own in keeping you? Is that tongue of your's resolved upon my destruction?'—'What have I done, Sir?' answered affrighted Partridge.

'Who was it gave you authority to mention the story of the robbery, or that the man you saw here was the person?'—'I, Sir!' cries Partridge. 'Now don't be guilty of a falsehood in denying it,' said Jones. 'If I did mention such a matter,' answers Partridge, 'I am sure, I thought no harm: for I should not have opened my lips, if it had not been to his own friends and relations; who, I imagined, would have let it go no farther.'—'But I have a much heavier charge against you,' cries Jones, 'than this. How durst you, after all the precautions I gave you, mention the name of Mr. Allworthy in this house?' Partridge denied that he ever had, with many oaths. 'How else,' said Jones, 'should Mrs. Miller be acquainted that there was any connection between him and me? And it is but this moment she told me, she respected me on this account.'—'O Lord, Sir!' said Partridge, 'I desire only to be heard out; and to be sure, never was any thing so unfortunate; hear me but out, and you will own how wrongfully you have accused me. When Mrs. Honour came down stairs last night, she met me in the entry, and asked me when my master had heard from Mr. Allworthy; and to be sure, Mrs. Miller heard the very words; and the moment Madam Honour was gone, she called me into the parlour to her; "Mr. Partridge," says she, "what Mr. Allworthy is that the gentlewoman mentioned? Is it the great Mr. Allworthy of Somersetshire?" Upon my word, Madam," says I, "I know nothing of the matter."—"Sure," says she, "your master is not the Mr. Jones I have heard Mr. Allworthy talk of?"—"Upon my word, Madam," says I, "I know nothing of the matter."—"Then," says she, turning to her daughter Nancy, says she, "as sure as tenpence, this is the very young gentleman; and he agrees exactly with the squire's description."—The Lord above knows who it was told her; for I am the arrantest villain that ever walked upon two legs, if ever it came out of my mouth. I promise you, Sir, I can keep a secret when I am desired. Nay, Sir, so far was I from telling her any thing

‘ thing about Mr. Allworthy, that I
 ‘ told her the very direct contrary :
 ‘ for though I did not contradict it at
 ‘ that moment, yet, as second thoughts,
 ‘ they say, are best ; so when I came
 ‘ to consider that somebody must have
 ‘ informed her, thinks I to myself, I
 ‘ will put an end to the story ; and so
 ‘ I went back again into the parlour
 ‘ some time afterwards, and says I,
 ‘ Upon my word,” says I, “ who-
 ‘ ever,” says I, “ told you that this
 ‘ gentleman was Mr. Jones ; that is,”
 ‘ says I, “ that this Mr. Jones was that
 ‘ Mr. Jones, told you a confounded
 ‘ lye : and I beg,” says I, “ you will
 ‘ never mention any such matter,”
 ‘ says I ; “ for my master,” says I,
 ‘ will think I must have told you so ;
 ‘ and I defy any body in the house, ever
 ‘ to say I mentioned any such word.”
 ‘ To be certain, Sir, it is a wonder-
 ‘ ful thing ; and I have been think-
 ‘ ing with myself ever since, how it
 ‘ was the came to know it ; not but I
 ‘ saw an old woman here t’other day
 ‘ a begging at the door, who looked
 ‘ as like her we saw in Warwickshire,
 ‘ that caused all that mischief to us.
 ‘ To be sure, it is never good to pass
 ‘ by an old woman without giving
 ‘ her something, especially if she looks
 ‘ at you ; for all the world shall never
 ‘ persuade me but they have a great
 ‘ power to do mischief ; and, to be
 ‘ sure, I shall never see an old woman
 ‘ again, but I shall think to myself,
 ‘ *infandum, regina, jubes renovare dolorem.*

The simplicity of Partridge set Jones
 a laughing, and put a final end to his
 anger, which had indeed seldom any
 long duration in his mind ; and in-
 stead of commenting on his defence,
 he told him, he intended presently to
 leave those lodgings ; and ordered him
 to go and endeavour to get him others.

CHAP. IV.

WHICH WE HOPE WILL BE VERY
 ATTENTIVELY PERUSED BY
 YOUNG PEOPLE OF BOTH SEXES.

PARTRIDGE had no sooner
 left Mr. Jones, than Mr. Night-
 ingale, with whom he had now con-
 tracted a great intimacy, came to him,
 and after a short salutation, said, “ So,
 ‘ Tom, I hear you had company very

‘ late last night. Upon my soul, you
 ‘ are a happy fellow, who have not
 ‘ been in town above a fortnight, and
 ‘ can keep chairs waiting at your door
 ‘ till two in the morning ? He then
 ‘ ran on with much common-place rail-
 ‘ lery of the same kind, till Jones at
 ‘ last interrupted him, saying, ‘ I sup-
 ‘ pose you have received all this in-
 ‘ formation from Mrs. Miller, who
 ‘ hath been up here a little while ago,
 ‘ to give me warning. The good wo-
 ‘ man is afraid, it seems, of the repu-
 ‘ tation of her daughters.” — “ Oh, she
 ‘ is wonderfully nice,” says Nightin-
 ‘ gale, ‘ upon that account : if you re-
 ‘ member, she would not let Nancy
 ‘ go with us to the masquerade.” —
 ‘ Nay, upon my honour, I think she’s
 ‘ in the right of it,” says Jones : “ how-
 ‘ ever, I have taken her at her word,
 ‘ and have sent Partridge to look for
 ‘ another lodging.” — “ If you will,”
 ‘ says Nightingale, ‘ we may, I believe,
 ‘ be again together ; for to tell you a
 ‘ secret, which I desire you won’t men-
 ‘ tion in the family, I intend to quit
 ‘ the house to-day.” — “ What ! hath
 ‘ Mrs. Miller given you warning too,
 ‘ my friend ?” cries Jones. “ No,” an-
 ‘ swered the other ; “ but the rooms are
 ‘ not convenient enough. Besides, I am
 ‘ grown weary of this part of the town.
 ‘ I want to be nearer the places of di-
 ‘ version : so I am going to Pall-mall.”
 ‘ — “ And do you intend to make a se-
 ‘ cret of your going away ?” said Jones.
 ‘ — “ I promise you,” answered Night-
 ‘ ingale, ‘ I don’t intend to birk my lodg-
 ‘ ings ; but I have a private reason for
 ‘ not taking a formal leave.” — “ Not
 ‘ so private,” answered Jones, ‘ I pro-
 ‘ mise you : I have seen it ever since
 ‘ the second day of my coming to the
 ‘ house. Here will be some wet eyes
 ‘ on your departure. Poor Nancy ! I
 ‘ pity her, faith ! Indeed, Jack, you
 ‘ have played the fool with that girl.
 ‘ You have given her a longing, which,
 ‘ I am afraid, nothing will ever
 ‘ cure her of.” Nightingale answered,
 ‘ What the devil would you have me
 ‘ do ? Would you have me marry
 ‘ her, to cure her ?” — “ No,” answered
 ‘ Jones ; ‘ I would not have had you
 ‘ make love to her, as you have often
 ‘ done in my presence. I have been
 ‘ astonished at the blindness of her mo-
 ‘ ther in never seeing it.” — “ Pugh,
 ‘ see it !” cries Nightingale ; “ what the
 ‘ devil

‘devil should die for?’—‘Why, see!’ said Jones, ‘that you have made her daughter distractedly in love with you. The poor girl cannot conceal it a moment; her eyes are never off from you, and she always colours every time you come into the room. Indeed, I pity her heartily; for she seems to be one of the best-natured and honestest of human creatures.’—‘And so,’ answered Nightingale, ‘according to your doctrine, one must not amuse one’s self by any common gallantries with women, for fear they should fall in love with us?’—‘Indeed, Jack,’ said Jones, ‘you will fully misunderstand me: I do not fancy women are so apt to fall in love; but you have gone far beyond common gallantries.’—‘What, do you suppose,’ says Nightingale, ‘that we have been a-bed together?’—‘No, upon my honour,’ answered Jones, very seriously; ‘I do not suppose to ill of you: nay, I will go farther, I do not imagine you have laid a regular premeditated scheme for the destruction of the quiet of a poor little creature, or have even foreseen the consequence: for I am sure thou art a very good-natured fellow; and such a one can never be guilty of a cruelty of that kind; but at the same time, you have pleased your own vanity, without considering that this poor girl was made a sacrifice to it; and while you have had no design but of amusing an idle hour, you have actually given her reason to flatter herself, that you had the most serious designs in her favour. Pr’ythee, Jack, answer me honestly: to what have tended all those elegant and luscious descriptions of happiness arising from violent and mutual fondness; all those warm professions of tenderness, and generous, disinterested love? Did you imagine she would not apply them? or, speak ingenuously, did not you intend she should?’—‘Upon my soul,’ Tom, cries Nightingale, ‘I did not think this was in thee! Thou wilt make an admirable passion. So, I suppose, you would not go to bed to Nancy, now, if she would let you?’—‘No,’ cries Jones; ‘may I be damned if I would!’—‘Tom, Tom!’ answered Nightingale, ‘last night; remember last night!’

‘When ev’ry eye was clos’d, and the pale moon
And silent stars shone conscious of the theft.’

‘Look’e, Mr. Nightingale,’ said Jones, ‘I am no canting hypocrite, nor do I pretend to the gift of chastity, more than my neighbours. I have been guilty with women, I own it; but am not conscious that I have ever injured any. Nor would I, to procure pleasure to myself, be knowingly the cause of misery to any human being.’

‘Well, well,’ said Nightingale, ‘I believe you; and I am convinced you acquit me of any such thing.’

‘I do, from my heart,’ answered Jones, ‘of having debauched the girl, but not from having gained her affections.’

‘If I have,’ said Nightingale, ‘I am sorry for it; but time and absence will soon wear off such impressions. It is a receipt I must take myself: for, to confess the truth to you, I never liked any girl half so much in my whole life; but I must let you into the whole secret, Tom. My father hath provided a match for me, with a woman I never saw; and she is now coming to town, in order for me to make my addresses to her.’

At these words Jones burst into a loud fit of laughter; when Nightingale cried—‘Nay, pr’ythee, don’t turn me into ridicule. The devil take me if I am not half mad about this matter! My poor Nancy! O Jones, Jones, I wish I had a fortune in my own possession!’

‘I heartily wish you had,’ cries Jones; ‘for if this be the case, I sincerely pity you both: but surely you don’t intend to go away without taking your leave of her?’

‘I would not,’ answered Nightingale, ‘undergo the pain of taking leave for ten thousand pounds; besides, I am convinced, instead of answering any good purpose, it would only serve to inflame my poor Nancy the more. I beg, therefore, you would not mention a word of it to-day; and in the evening, or to-morrow morning, I intend to depart.’

Jones promised he would not; and said, upon reflection he thought, as he

had determined and was obliged to leave her, he took the most prudent method. He then told Nightingale, he should be very glad to lodge in the same house with him; and it was accordingly agreed between them, that Nightingale should procure him either the ground floor, or the two pair of stairs; for the young gentleman himself was to occupy that which was between them.

This Nightingale, of whom we shall be presently obliged to say a little more, was, in the ordinary transactions of life, a man of strict honour; and, what is more rare among young gentlemen of the town, one of strict honesty too; yet in affairs of love he was somewhat looser in his morals: not that he was, even here, as void of principle as gentlemen sometimes are, and oftener affect to be; but it is certain, he had been guilty of some indefensible treachery to women; and had, in a certain mystery, called Making Love, practised many deceits, which, if he had used in trade, he would have been counted the greatest villain upon earth.

But as the world, I know not well for what reason, agree to see this treachery in a better light, he was so far from being ashamed of his iniquities of this kind, that he gloried in them; and would often boast of his skill in gaining of women, and his triumphs over their hearts; for which he had before this time received some rebukes from Jones, who always expressed great bitterness against any misbehaviour to the fair part of the species; who, if considered, he said, as they ought to be, in the light of the dearest friends, were to be cultivated, honoured, and caressed, with the utmost love and tenderness; but, if regarded as enemies, were a conquest of which a man ought rather to be ashamed, than to value himself upon it.

CHAP. V.

A SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE HISTORY OF MRS. MILLER.

JONES this day ate a pretty good dinner for a sick man; that is to say, the larger half of a shoulder of mutton. In the afternoon, he received

an invitation from Mrs. Miller to drink tea; for that good woman having learnt, either by means of Partridge, or by some other means, natural or supernatural, that he had a connection with Mr. Allworthy, could not endure the thoughts of parting with him in an angry manner.

Jones accepted the invitation; and no sooner was the tea-kettle removed, and the girls sent out of the room, than the widow, without much preface, began as follows. 'Well, there are very surprizing things happen in this world; but certainly it is a wonderful business, that I should have a relation of Mr. Allworthy in my house, and never know any thing of the matter. Alas, Sir, you little imagine what a friend that best of gentlemen hath been to me and mine. Yes, Sir, I am not ashamed to own it; it is owing to his goodness, that I did not long since perish for want, and leave my poor little wretches, two destitute, helpless, friendless orphans, to the care, or rather to the cruelty of the world.

You must know, Sir, though I am now reduced to get my living by letting lodgings, I was born and bred a gentlewoman. My father was an officer of the army, and died in a considerable rank: but he lived up to his pay; and as that expired with him, his family, at his death, became beggars. We were three sisters: one of us had the good luck to die soon after of the small-pox: a lady was so kind as to take the second out of charity, as she said, to wait upon her. The mother of this lady had been a servant to my grandmother; and having inherited a vast fortune from her father, which he had got by pawnbroking, was married to a gentleman of great estate and fashion. She used my sister so barbarously, often upbraiding her with her birth and poverty, calling her in derision a gentlewoman, that I believe she at length broke the heart of the poor girl. In short, she likewise died within a twelvemonth after my father. Fortune thought proper to provide better for me; and within a month from his decease, I was married to a clergyman, who had been my lover a long time before, and who had been very ill used by my father on that account:

count: for though my poor father could not give any of us a single shilling, yet he bred us up as delicately, considered us, and would have had us consider ourselves as highly, as if we had been the richest heiresses. But my dear husband forgot all this usage; and the moment we were become fatherless, he immediately renewed his addresses to me so warmly, that I, who always liked, and now more than ever esteemed him, soon complied. Five years did I live in a state of perfect happiness with that best of men, till at last—O cruel, cruel fortune! that ever separated us, that deprived me of the kindest of husbands, and my poor girls of the tenderest parent!—O my poor girls! you never knew the blessing which ye lost.—I am ashamed, Mr. Jones, of this womanish weakness; but I shall never mention him without tears.—‘I ought rather, Madam,’ said Jones, ‘to be ashamed that I do not accompany you.’—‘Well, Sir,’ continued she, ‘I was now left a second time, in a much worse condition than before: besides the terrible affliction I was to encounter, I had now two children to provide for; and was, if possible, more penniless than ever; when that great, that good, that glorious man, Mr. Allworthy, who had some little acquaintance with my husband, accidentally heard of my distress, and immediately writ this letter to me. Here, Sir, here it is; I put it into my pocket to shew it you. This is the letter, Sir; I must and will read it to you.’

“MADAM,

“I Heartily condole with you on your late grievous loss, which your own good sense, and the excellent lessons you must have learnt from the worthiest of men, will better enable you to bear, than any advice which I am capable of giving. Nor have I any doubt that you, whom I have heard to be the tenderest of mothers, will suffer any immoderate indulgence of grief to prevent you from discharging your duty to those poor infants, who now

alone stand in need of your tenderness.

“However, as you must be supposed at present to be incapable of much worldly consideration, you will pardon my having ordered a person to wait on you, and to pay you twenty guineas, which I beg you will accept, till I have the pleasure of seeing you; and believe me to be, Madam, &c.”

“This letter, Sir, I received within a fortnight after the irreparable loss I have mentioned; and within a fortnight afterwards, Mr. Allworthy, the blessed Mr. Allworthy, came to pay me a visit; when he placed me in the house where you now see me, gave me a large sum of money to furnish it, and settled an annuity of 50 l. a year upon me, which I have constantly received ever since. Judge then, Mr. Jones, in what regard I must hold a benefactor, to whom I owe the preservation of my life, and of those dear children, for whose sake alone my life is valuable. Do not, therefore, think me impatient, Mr. Jones, (since I must esteem one for whom I know Mr. Allworthy hath so much value) if I beg you not to converse with these wicked women. You are a young gentleman, and do not know half their artful wiles. Do not be angry with me, Sir, for what I said upon account of my house: you must be sensible, it would be the ruin of my poor dear girls. Besides, Sir, you cannot but be acquainted, that Mr. Allworthy himself would never forgive my conniving at such matters, and particularly with you.’

“Upon my word, Madam,” said Jones, “you need make no farther apology; nor do I in the least take any thing ill you have said: but give me leave, as no one can have more value than myself for Mr. Allworthy, to deliver you from one mistake, which, perhaps, would not be altogether for his honour: I do assure you, I am no relation of his.” “Alas, Sir!” answered she, “I know you are not. I know very well who you are; for Mr. Allworthy hath told me all: but I do assure you, had you been twenty times

times his son, he could not have expressed more regard for you, than he hath often expressed in my presence. You need not be ashamed, Sir, of what you are; I promise you, no good person will esteem you the less on that account. No, Mr. Jones; the words "dishonourable birth," are nonsense, as my dear, dear husband used to say, unless the word "dishonourable" be applied to the parents; for the children can derive no real dishonour from an act of which they are entirely innocent.

Here Jones heaved a deep sigh, and then said, 'Since I perceive, Madam, you really do know me, and Mr. Allworthy hath thought proper to mention my name to you; and since you have been so explicit with me as to your own affairs, I will acquaint you with some more circumstances concerning myself.' And these, Mrs. Miller having expressed great desire and curiosity to hear, he began, and related to her his whole history, without once mentioning the name of Sophia.

There is a kind of sympathy in honest minds, by means of which they give an easy credit to each other. Mrs. Miller believed all which Jones told her to be true, and expressed much pity and concern for him. She was beginning to comment on the story, but Jones interrupted her: for as the hour of affignation now drew nigh, he began to stipulate for a second interview with the lady that evening, which he promised should be the last at her house; swearing, at the same time, that she was one of great distinction, and that nothing but what was entirely innocent was to pass between them; and I do firmly believe he intended to keep his word.

Mrs. Miller was at length prevailed on; and Jones departed to his chamber, where he sat alone till twelve o'clock; but no Lady Bellafton appeared.

As we have said that this lady had a great affection for Jones, and as it must have appeared that she really had so; the reader may, perhaps, wonder at the first failure of her appointment, as she apprehended him to be confined by sickness, a season when friendship seems most to require such visits. This behaviour, therefore, in the lady, may,

by some, be condemned as unnatural; but that is not our fault; for our business is only to record truth.

CH A P. VI.
CONTAINING A SCENE, WHICH WE DOUBT NOT WILL AFFECT ALL OUR READERS.

MR. Jones closed not his eyes during all the former part of the night; not owing to any uneasiness which he conceived at being disappointed by Lady Bellafton; nor was Sophia herself, though most of his waking hours were justly to be charged to her account, the present cause of dispelling his slumbers. In fact, poor Jones was one of the best natured fellows alive, and had all that weakness which is called compassion, and which distinguishes this imperfect character, from that noble firmness of mind, which rolls a man, as it were, within himself; and, like a polished bowl, enables him to run through the world, without being once stopped by the calamities which happen to others. He could not help, therefore, compassionating the situation of poor Nancy; whose love for Mr. Nightingale seemed to him so apparent, that he was astonished at the blindness of her mother, who had more than once, the preceding evening, remarked to him the great change in the temper of her daughter; who from being, she said, one of the liveliest, merriest girls in the world, was, on a sudden, become all gloom and melancholy.

Sleep, however, at length got the better of all resistance; and now, as if he had really been a deity, as the ancients imagined, and an offended one too, he seemed to enjoy his dear-bought conquest. To speak simply, and without any metaphor, Mr. Jones slept till eleven the next morning; and would, perhaps, have continued in the same quiet situation much longer, had not a violent uproar awakened him.

Partridge was now summoned; who, being asked what was the matter, answered, that there was a dreadful hurricane below stairs; that Miss Nancy was in fits; and that the other sister and the mother, were both crying and lamenting over her. Jones expressed much

much concern at this news; which Partridge endeavoured to relieve, by saying, with a smile, he fancied the young lady was in no danger of death; for that Susan (which was the name of the maid) had given him to understand, it was nothing more than a common affair. 'In short,' said he, 'Miss Nancy hath had a mind to be as wise as her mother; that's all. She was a little hungry, it seems, and so sat down to dinner before grace was said; and so there is a child coming for the Foundling-Hospital.'—'Pr'ythee, leave thy stupid jesting,' cries Jones; 'is the misery of these poor wretches a subject of mirth? Go immediately to Mrs. Miller, and tell her, I beg leave—Stay, you will make some blunder: I will go myself; for she desired me to breakfast with her.' He then rose, and dressed himself as fast as he could; and while he was dressing, Partridge, notwithstanding many severe rebukes, could not avoid throwing forth certain pieces of brutality, commonly called jests, on this occasion. Jones was no sooner dressed than he walked down stairs, and knocking at the door, was presently admitted, by the maid, into the outward parlour, which was as empty of company, as it was of any apparatus for eating. Mrs. Miller was in the inner room with her daughter, whence the maid presently brought a message to Mr. Jones, that her mistress hoped he would excuse the disappointment; but an accident had happened, which made it impossible for her to have the pleasure of his company at breakfast that day; and begged his pardon for not sending him up notice sooner. Jones desired she would give herself no trouble about any thing so trifling as his disappointment; that he was heartily sorry for the occasion; and that, if he could be of any service to her, she might command him.

He had scarce spoke these words, when Mrs. Miller, who heard them all, suddenly threw open the door, and coming out to him, in a flood of tears, said, 'O Mr. Jones, you are certainly one of the best young men alive. I give you a thousand thanks for your kind offer of your service; but, alas! Sir, it is out of your power

to preserve my poor girl. O my child, my child! She is undone, she is ruined for ever!'—'I hope, Madam,' said Jones, 'no villain—' 'O Mr. Jones,' said she, 'that villain who yesterday left my lodgings, hath betrayed my poor girl, hath destroyed her! I know you are a man of honour. You have a good—a noble heart, Mr. Jones. The actions, to which I have been myself a witness, could proceed from no other. I will tell you all: nay, indeed, it is impossible, after what hath happened, to keep it a secret. That Nightingale, that barbarous villain, hath undone my daughter! She is—she is—O Mr. Jones! my girl is with child by him; and in that condition he hath deserted her. Here! here, Sir, is his cruel letter; read it, Mr. Jones, and tell me if such another monster lives!'

The letter was as follows.

'DEAR NANCY,

'AS I found it impossible to mention to you what, I am afraid, will be no less shocking to you than it is to me, I have taken this method to inform you, that my father insists upon my immediately paying my addresses to a young lady of fortune, whom he hath provided for me—I need not write the detested word. Your own good understanding will make you sensible, how entirely I am obliged to an obedience, by which I shall be for ever excluded from your dear arms. The fondness of your mother may encourage you to trust her with the unhappy consequence of our love, which may be easily kept a secret from the world; and for which I will take care to provide, as I will for you. I wish you may feel less on this account, than I have suffered: but summon all your fortitude to your assistance; and forgive and forget the man, whom nothing but the prospect of certain ruin, could have forced to write this letter. I bid you forget me—I mean, only as a lover; but the best of friends you shall ever find, in your faithful though unhappy

'J. N.'

When

When Jones had read this letter, they both stood silent during a minute, looking at each other; at last he began thus. 'I cannot express, Madam, how much I am shocked at what I have read; yet let me beg you, in one particular, to take the writer's advice. Consider the reputation of your daughter.—It is gone, it is lost, Mr. Jones,' cried she, 'as well as her innocence! She received the letter in a room full of company, and immediately swooned away upon opening it: the contents were known to every one present. But the loss of her reputation, bad as it is, is not the worst; I shall lose my child! she hath attempted twice to destroy herself already; and though she hath been hitherto prevented, vows she will not out-live it; nor could I myself out-live any accident of that nature. What then will become of my little Betsey, a helpless infant orphan! And the poor little wretch will, I believe, break her heart at the miseries with which she sees her sister and myself distracted, while she is ignorant of the cause. O 'tis the most sensible and best-natured little thing. The barbarous, cruel—hath destroyed us all. O my poor children! Is this the reward of all my cares? Is this the fruit of all my prospects? Have I so cheerfully undergone all the labours and duties of a mother? Have I been so tender of their infancy, so careful of their education? Have I been toiling so many years, denying myself even the conveniencies of life, to provide some little sustenance for them, to lose one or both in such a manner!'—'Indeed, Madam,' said Jones, with tears in his eyes, 'I pity you from my soul.'—'O Mr. Jones!' answered she, 'even you, though I know the goodness of your heart, can have no idea of what I feel. The best, the kindest, the most dutiful of children!—O my poor Nancy, the darling of my soul! the delight of my eyes! the pride of my heart! too much, indeed, my pride; for to those foolish, ambitious hopes, arising from her beauty, I owe her ruin. Alas! I saw with pleasure the liking which this young man had for her, I thought it an honourable affection, and flattered my foolish vanity with the thoughts

of seeing her married to one so much her superior. And a thousand times in my presence, nay, often in yours, he hath endeavoured to soothe and encourage these hopes by the most generous expressions of disinterested love, which he hath always directed to my poor girl; and which I, as well as she, believed to be real. Could I have believed that these were only snares laid to betray the innocence of my child, and for the ruin of us all!' At these words, little Betsey came running into the room, crying, 'Dear mamma, for Heaven's sake come to my sister; for she is in another fit, and my cousin can't hold her.' Mrs. Miller immediately obeyed the summons; but first ordered Betsey to stay with Mr. Jones, and begged him to entertain her a few minutes, saying, in the most pathetic voice, 'Good Heaven! let me preserve one of my children at least.'

Jones, in compliance with this request, did all he could to comfort the little girl, though he was, in reality, himself very highly affected with Mrs. Miller's story. He told her, her sister would be soon very well again; that by taking on in that manner, she would not only make her sister worse, but make her mother ill too. 'Indeed, Sir,' says she, 'I would not do any thing to hurt them for the world. I would burst my heart, rather than they should see me cry. But my poor sister can't see me cry: I am afraid she will never be able to see me cry any more. Indeed, I can't part with her! indeed, I can't. And then poor mamma too, what will become of her! She says she will die too, and leave me: but I am resolved I won't be left behind.'—'And are you not afraid to die, my little Betsey?' said Jones. 'Yes,' answered she, 'I was always afraid to die; because I must have left my mamma, and my sister; but I am not afraid of going any where with those I love.'

Jones was so pleased with this answer, that he eagerly kissed the child; and soon after Mrs. Miller returned, saying, she thanked Heaven, Nancy was now come to herself. 'And now Betsey,' says she, 'you may go in; for your sister is better, and longs to see you.' She then turned to Jones, and

and began to renew her apologies for having disappointed him of his breakfast.

'I hope, Madam,' said Jones, 'I shall have a more exquisite repast than any you could have provided for me. This, I assure you, will be the case; if I can do any service to this little family of love. But whatever success may attend my endeavours, I am resolved to attempt it. I am very much deceived in Mr. Nightingale, if, notwithstanding what hath happened, he hath not much goodness of heart at the bottom, as well as a very violent affection for your daughter. If this be the case, I think the picture which I shall lay before him, will affect him. Endeavour, Madam, to comfort yourself, and Miss Nancy, as well as you can. I will go instantly in quest of Mr. Nightingale; and I hope to bring you good news.'

Mrs. Miller fell upon her knees, and invoked all the blessings of Heaven upon Mr. Jones; to which the afterwards added the most passionate expressions of gratitude. He then departed to find Mr. Nightingale; and the good woman returned to comfort her daughter, who was somewhat cheered at what her mother told her, and both joined in re-sounding the praises of Mr. Jones.

CHAP. VII.

THE INTERVIEW BETWEEN MR. JONES AND MR. NIGHTINGALE.

THE good or evil we confer on others, very often, I believe, recoils on ourselves. For as men of a benign disposition enjoy their own acts of beneficence, equally with those to whom they are done, so there are scarce any natures so entirely diabolical, as to be capable of doing injuries, without paying themselves some pangs, for the ruin which they bring on their fellow creatures.

Mr. Nightingale, at least, was not such a person. On the contrary, Jones found him in his new lodgings, sitting melancholy by the fire, and silently lamenting the unhappy situation in which he had placed poor Nancy. He no sooner saw his friend appear, than he rose hastily to meet him; and after much

congratulation said, 'Nothing could have been more opportune than this kind visit; for I was never more in the spleen in my life.'

'I am sorry,' answered Jones, 'that I bring news very unlikely to relieve you; nay, what I am convinced must, of all others, shock you the most. However, it is necessary you should know it. Without farther preface, then, I come to you, Mr. Nightingale, from a worthy family, which you have involved in misery and ruin.' Mr. Nightingale changed colour at these words; but Jones, without regarding it, proceeded, in the liveliest manner, to paint the tragical story, with which the reader was acquainted in the last chapter.

Nightingale never once interrupted the narration, though he discovered violent emotions at many parts of it. But when it was concluded, after fetching a deep sigh, he said, 'What you tell me, my friend, affects me in the tenderest manner. Sure there never was so cursed an accident as the poor girl's betraying my letter. Her reputation might otherwise have been safe, and the affair might have remained a profound secret; and then the girl might have gone off never the worse; for many such things happen in this town: and if the husband should suspect a little when it is too late, it will be his wiser conduct to conceal his suspicion both from his wife and the world.'

'Indeed, my friend,' answered Jones, 'this could not have been the case with your poor Nancy. You have so entirely gained her affections, that it is the loss of you, and not of her reputation, which afflicts her, and will end in the destruction of her and her family.'—'Nay, for that matter, I promise you,' cries Nightingale, 'she hath my affections so absolutely, that my wife, whoever she is to be, will have very little share in them.'—'And is it possible then,' said Jones, 'you can think of deserting her?'—'Why, what can I do?' answered the other.—'Ask Miss Nancy,' replied Jones, warmly. 'In the condition to which you have reduced her, I sincerely think she ought to determine what reparation you shall make her. Her interest alone, and not yours, ought to be your sole consideration. But if

'you ask me what you shall do; what can you do less,' cries Jones, 'than fulfil the expectations of her family, and her own! Nay, I sincerely tell you, they were mine too, ever since I first saw you together. You will pardon me, if I presume on the friendship you have favoured me with, moved as I am with compassion for those poor creatures: but your own heart will best suggest to you, whether you have never intended, by your conduct, to persuade the mother, as well as the daughter, into an opinion, that you designed honourably; and if so, though there may have been no direct promise of marriage in the case, I will leave to your own good understanding, how far you are bound to proceed.'

'Nay, I must not only confess what you have hinted,' said Nightingale; 'but I am afraid, even that very promise you mention, I have given.'— 'And can you, after owning that,' said Jones, 'hesitate a moment?'— 'Consider, my friend,' answered the other; 'I know you are a man of honour, and would advise no one to act contrary to it's rules; if there were no other objection, can I, after this publication of her disgrace, think of such an alliance with honour?'— 'Undoubtedly,' replied Jones; 'and the very best and truest honour, which is goodness, requires it of you. As you mention a scruple of this kind, you will give me leave to examine it. Can you, with honour, be guilty of having, under false pretences, deceived a young woman and her family; and of having, by these means, treacherously robbed her of her innocence? Can you, with honour, be the knowing, the wilful, nay, I must add, the artful contriver of the ruin of a human being? Can you, with honour, destroy the fame, the peace, nay, probably, both the life and soul too of this creature? Can honour bear the thought, that this creature is a tender, helpless, defenceless, young woman? A young woman who loves, who doats on you, who dies for you; who hath placed the utmost confidence in your promises; and to that confidence hath sacrificed every thing which is dear to her? Can honour support such contemplations as these a moment!'

'Common sense, indeed,' said Nightingale, 'warrants all you say; but yet you well know the opinion of the world is so much the contrary, that was I to marry a whore, though my own, I should be ashamed of ever showing my face again.'

'Fie upon it, Mr. Nightingale!' said Jones; 'do not call her by so ungenerous a name: when you promised to marry her, she became your wife; and she hath sinned more against prudence than virtue. And what is this world, which you would be ashamed to face, but the vile, the foolish, and the profligate? Forgive me, if I say, such a shame must proceed from false modesty, which always attends false honour as it's shadow. But I am well assured, there is not a man of real sense and goodness in the world, who would not honour and applaud the action. But admit no other would, would not your own heart, my friend, applaud it? And do not the warm, rapturous sensations, which we feel from the consciousness of an honest, noble, generous, benevolent action, convey more delight to the mind, than the undeserved praise of millions? Set the alternative fairly before your eyes. On the one side, see this poor, unhappy, tender, believing girl, in the arms of her wretched mother, breathing her last. Hear her breaking heart, in agonies, sighing out your name; and lamenting, rather than accusing, the cruelty which weighs her down to destruction. Paint to your imagination the circumstances of her fond, despairing parent, driven to madness, or, perhaps, to death, by the loss of her lovely daughter. View the poor, helpless, orphan-infant: and, when your mind hath dwelt a moment only on such ideas, consider yourself as the cause of all the ruin of this poor, little, worthy, defenceless family! On the other side, consider yourself as relieving them from their temporary sufferings. Think with what joy, with what transports, that lovely creature will fly to your arms. See her blood returning to her pale cheeks, her fire to her languid eyes, and raptures to her tortured breast! Consider the exultations of her mother; the happiness of all! Think of this little family, made, by one

'aſt of yours, compleatly happy!
'Think of this alternative; and ſure
'I am miſtaken in my friend, if it re-
'quires any long deliberation, whe-
'ther he will ſink theſe wretches down
'for ever; or, by one generous, no-
'ble reſolution, raiſe them all from
'the brink of miſery and deſpair, to
'the higheſt pitch of human happi-
'neſs. Add to this, but one conſide-
'ration more; the conſideration that it
'is your duty ſo to do: that the
'miſery from which you will re-
'lieve theſe poor people, is the miſery
'which you yourſelf have wilfully
'brought upon them.'

'O my dear friend!' cries Nightingale, 'I wanted not your eloquence to rouse me. I pity poor Nancy from my ſoul; and would willingly give any thing in my power, that no familiarities had ever paſſed between us. Nay, believe me, I had many ſtruggles with my paſſion before I could prevail with myſelf to write that cruel letter, which hath cauſed all the miſery in that unhappy family. If I had no inclinations to conſult but my own, I would marry her to-morrow morning: I would, by Heaven! but you will eaſily imagine how impoſſible it would be to prevail on my father to conſent to ſuch a match: beſides, he hath provided another for me; and to-morrow, by his expreſs command, I am to wait on the lady.'

'I have not the honour to know your father, ſaid Jones; 'but ſuppoſe he could be perſuaded, would you yourſelf conſent to the only means of preſerving theſe poor people?'—'As eagerly as I would purſue my happineſs,' answered Nightingale; 'for I never ſhall find it in any other woman—O my dear friend, could you imagine what I have felt within theſe twelve hours for my poor girl, I am convinced ſhe would not engroſs all your pity! Paſſion leads me only to her; and if I had any fooliſh ſcruples of honour, you have fully ſatiſfied them: could my father be induced to comply with my deſires, nothing would be wanting to compleat my own happineſs, or that of my Nancy.'

'Then I am reſolved to undertake it,' ſaid Jones. 'You muſt not be angry with me, in whatever light it

'may be neceſſary to ſet this affair; which, you may depend on it, could not otherwiſe be long hid from him: for things of this nature make a quick progreſs, when once they get abroad, as this unhappily hath already. Beſides, ſhould any fatal accident follow, as upon my ſoul I am afraid will, unleſs immediately prevented, the publick would ring of your name, in a manner which, if your father hath common humanity, muſt offend him. If you will, therefore, tell me where I may find the old gentleman, I will not loſe a moment in the buſineſs; which, while I purſue, you cannot do a more generous action, than by paying a viſit to the poor girl. You will find I have not exaggerated in the account I have given of the wretchedneſs of the family.'

Nightingale immediately conſented to the propoſal; and now having acquainted Jones with his father's lodging, and the coffee-houſe where he would moſt probably find him, he heſitated a moment, and then ſaid, 'My dear Tom, you are going to undertake an impoſſibility. If you knew my father, you would never think of obtaining his conſent. Stay, there is one way—Suppoſe you told him I was already married, it might be eaſier to reconcile him to the fact after it was done; and, upon my honour, I am ſo affected with what you have ſaid, and I love my Nancy ſo paſſionately, I almoſt wiſh it was done, whatever might be the conſequence.'

Jones greatly approved the hint, and promiſed to purſue it. They then ſeparated; Nightingale to viſit his Nancy, and Jones in queſt of the old gentleman.

C H A P. VIII.

WHAT PASSED BETWEEN JONES AND OLD MR. NIGHTINGALE; WITH THE ARRIVAL OF A PERSON NOT YET MENTIONED IN THIS HISTORY.

NOTWITHSTANDING the ſentiment of the Roman ſatiriſt, which denies the divinity of Fortune, and the opinion of Seneca to the ſame purpoſe;

Cicero, who was, I believe, a wiser man than either of them, expressly holds the contrary; and certain it is, there are some incidents in life, so very strange and unaccountable, that it seems to require more than human skill and foresight in producing them.

Of this kind was what now happened to Jones, who found Mr. Nightingale the elder in so critical a minute, that Fortune, if she was really worthy of all the worship she received at Rome, could not have contrived such another. In short, the old gentleman and the father of the young lady whom he intended for his son, had been hard at it for many hours; and the latter was just now gone, and had left the former, delighted with the thoughts that he had succeeded in a long contention, which had been between the two fathers of the future bride and bridegroom; in which, both endeavoured to over-reach the other; and, as it not rarely happens in such cases, both had retreated fully satisfied of having obtained the victory.

This gentleman whom Mr. Jones now visited, was what they call a man of the world; that is to say, a man who directs his conduct in this world, as one who being fully persuaded there is no other, is resolved to make the most of this. In his early years, he had been bred to trade; but having acquired a very good fortune, he had lately declined his business; or, to speak more properly, had changed it from dealing in goods, to dealing only in money; of which he had always a plentiful fund at command; and of which, he knew very well how to make a very plentiful advantage, sometimes of the necessities of private men, and sometimes of those of the publick. He had, indeed, conversed so entirely with money, that it may be almost doubted, whether he imagined there was any other thing really existed in the world: this, at least, may be certainly averred, that he firmly believed nothing else to have any real value.

The reader will, I fancy, allow, that Fortune could not have culled out a more improper person for Mr. Jones to attack with any probability of success; nor could the whimsical lady have directed this attack at a more unseasonable time.

As money then was always uppermost in this gentleman's thoughts, so the moment he saw a stranger within his doors, it immediately occurred to his imagination, that such stranger was either come to bring him money, or to fetch it from him. And according as one or other of these thoughts prevailed, he conceived a favourable or unfavourable idea of the person who approached him.

Unluckily for Jones, the latter of these was the ascendant at present; for as a young gentleman had visited him the day before, with a bill from his son, for a play debt, he apprehended, at the first sight of Jones, that he was come on such another errand. Jones, therefore, had no sooner told him, that he was come on his son's account, than the old gentleman, being confirmed in his suspicion, burst forth into an exclamation, that he would lose his labour. 'Is it then possible, Sir,' answered Jones, 'that you can guess my business?'—'If I do guess it,' replied the other, 'I repeat again to you, you will lose your labour. What, I suppose you are one of those sparks who lead my son into all those scenes of riot and debauchery, which will be his destruction; but I shall pay no more of his bills, I promise you. I expect he will quit all such company for the future. If I had imagined otherwise, I should not have provided a wife for him; for I would be instrumental in the ruin of nobody.'—'How, Sir!' said Jones, 'and was this lady of your providing?'—'Pray, Sir,' answered the old gentleman, 'how comes it to be any concern of yours?'—'Nay, dear Sir,' replied Jones, 'be not offended that I interest myself in what regards your son's happiness, for whom I have so great an honour and value. It was upon that very account I came to wait on you. I can't express the satisfaction you have given me by what you say; for I do assure you, your son is a person for whom I have the highest honour. Nay, Sir, it is not easy to express the esteem I have for you, who could be so generous, so good, so kind, so indulgent, to provide such a match for your son; a woman, who, I dare swear, will make him one of the happiest men upon earth.' There is scarce any thing which so happily

happily introduces men to our good liking, as having conceived some alarm at their first appearance; when once those apprehensions begin to vanish, we soon forget the fears which they occasioned, and look on ourselves as indebted for our present ease, to those very persons who at first raised our fears.

Thus it happened to Nightingale; who no sooner found that Jones had no demand on him, as he suspected, than he began to be pleased with his presence. 'Pray, good Sir,' said he, 'be pleased to sit down. I do not remember to have ever had the pleasure of seeing you before; but if you are a friend of my son, and have any thing to say concerning this young lady, I shall be glad to hear you. As to her making him happy, it will be his own fault if she doth not. I have discharged my duty, in taking care of the main article. She will bring him a fortune capable of making any reasonable, prudent, sober man happy.'—'Undoubtedly,' cries Jones; 'for she is in herself a fortune; so beautiful, so genteel, so sweet-tempered, and so well educated; she is, indeed, a most accomplished young lady; sings admirably well, and hath a most delicate hand at the harpsichord.'—'I did not know any of these matters,' answered the old gentleman, 'for I never saw the lady; but I do not like her the worse for what you tell me; and I am the better pleased with her father for not laying any stress on these qualifications in our bargain. I shall always think it a proof of his understanding. A silly fellow would have brought in these articles as an addition to her fortune; but to give him his due, he never mentioned any such matter; though, to be sure, they are no disparagements to a woman.'—'I do assure you, Sir,' cries Jones, 'she hath them all in the most eminent degree: for my part, I own I was afraid you might have been a little backward, a little less inclined to the match: for your son told me you had never seen the lady; therefore, I came, Sir, in that case, to entreat you, to conjure you, as you value the happiness of your son, not to be averse to his match with a wo-

man who hath not only all the good qualities I have mentioned, but many more.'—'If that was your business, Sir,' said the old gentleman, 'we are both obliged to you; and you may be perfectly easy; for I give you my word, I was very well satisfied with her fortune.'—'Sir,' answered Jones, 'I honour you every moment more and more. To be so easily satisfied, so very moderate on that account, is a proof of the soundness of your understanding, as well as the nobleness of your mind.'—'Not so very moderate, young gentleman; not so very moderate!' answered the father. 'Still more and more noble,' replied Jones, 'and give me leave to add, sensible; for sure, it is little less than madness, to consider money as the sole foundation of happiness. Such a woman as this, with her little, her nothing of a fortune—' 'I find,' cries the old gentleman, 'you have a pretty just opinion of money, my friend; or else you are better acquainted with the person of the lady than with her circumstances. Why, pray, what fortune do you imagine this lady to have?'—'What fortune?' cries Jones, 'why too contemptible a one to be named for your son.'—'Well, well, well!' said the other, 'perhaps he might have done better.'—'That I deny,' said Jones; 'for she is one of the best of women.'—'Ay, ay, but in point of fortune I mean,' answered the other. 'And yet, as to that now, how much do you imagine your friend is to have?' 'How much,' cries Jones, 'how much? Why, at the utmost, perhaps, two hundred pounds.'—'Do you mean to banter me, young gentleman?' said the father, a little angry. 'No, upon my soul,' answered Jones, 'I am in earnest; nay, I believe I have gone to the utmost farthing. If I do the lady an injury, I ask her pardon.'—'Indeed, you do,' cries the father. 'I am certain she hath fifty times that sum; and she shall produce fifty to that, before I consent that she shall marry my son.'—'Nay,' said Jones, 'it is too late to talk of consent now. If she hath not fifty farthings, your son is married.'—'My son married!' answered the old gentleman with surprise.

prize. 'Nay,' said Jones, 'I thought you was acquainted with it.'—'My son married to Miss Harris!' answered he again. 'To Miss Harris!' said Jones; 'no, Sir, to Miss Nancy Miller, the daughter of Mrs. Miller, at whose house he lodged; a young lady, who, though her mother is reduced to let lodgings—' 'Are you bantering, or are you in earnest?' cries the father, with a most solemn voice. 'Indeed, Sir,' answered Jones, 'I scorn the character of a banterer; I came to you in most serious earnest; imagining, as I find true, that your son had never dared acquaint you with a match so much inferior to him in point of fortune, though the reputation of the lady will suffer it no longer to remain a secret.'

While the father stood like one struck suddenly dumb at this news, a gentleman came into the room, and saluted him by the name of brother.

But though these two were in consanguinity so nearly related, they were in their dispositions, almost the opposites to each other. The brother who now arrived, had likewise been bred to trade, in which he no sooner saw himself worth six thousand pounds, than he purchased a small estate with the greatest part of it, and retired into the country; where he married the daughter of an unbeneficed clergyman; a young lady, who, though she had neither beauty nor fortune, had recommended herself to his choice, entirely by her good humour, of which she possessed a very large share.

With this woman he had, during twenty-five years, lived a life more resembling the model which certain poets ascribe to the golden age, than any of those patterns which are furnished by the present times. By her he had four children, but none of them arrived at maturity, except only one daughter, whom, in vulgar language, he and his wife had spoiled; that is, had educated with the utmost tenderness and fondness; which she returned to such a degree, that she had actually refused a very extraordinary match, with a gentleman a little turned of forty, because she could not bring herself to part with her parents.

The young lady whom Mr. Nightingale had intended for his son, was a

near neighbour of his brother, and an acquaintance of his niece; and, in reality, it was upon the account of this projected match, that he was now come to town; not, indeed, to forward, but to dissuade his brother from a purpose, which, he conceived, would inevitably ruin his nephew; for he foresaw no other event from a union with Miss Harris, notwithstanding the largeness of her fortune; as neither her person nor mind seemed, to him, to promise any kind of matrimonial felicity; for she was very tall, very thin, very ugly, very affected, very silly, and very ill-natured.

His brother, therefore, no sooner mentioned the marriage of his nephew with Miss Miller, than he expressed the utmost satisfaction; and when the father had very bitterly reviled his son, and pronounced sentence of beggary upon him, the uncle began in the following manner.

'If you was a little cooler, brother, I would ask you whether you love your son for his sake, or for your own. You would answer, I suppose, and so I suppose you think, for his sake; and, doubtless, it is his happiness which you intended in the marriage you proposed for him.'

'Now, brother, to prescribe rules of happiness to others, hath always appeared to me very absurd; and to insist on doing this, very tyrannical. It is a vulgar error, I know; but it is nevertheless an error: and if this be absurd in other things, it is mostly so in the affair of marriage, the happiness of which depends entirely on the affection which subsists between the parties.'

'I have, therefore, always thought it unreasonable in parents, to desire to chuse for their children on this occasion; since, to force affection, is an impossible attempt; nay, so much doth love abhor force, that I know not whether, through an unfortunate, but incurable perverseness in our natures, it may not be even impatient of persuasion.'

'It is, however, true, that, though a parent will not, I think, wisely prescribe, he ought to be consulted on this occasion; and in strictness, perhaps, should at least have a negative voice. My nephew, therefore, I own, in marrying without asking

‘asking your advice, hath been guilty of a fault. But honestly speaking, brother, have you not a little promoted this fault? Have not your frequent declarations on this subject, given him a moral certainty of your refusal, where there was any deficiency in point of fortune? Nay, doth not your present anger arise solely from that deficiency? And if he hath failed in his duty here, did you not as much exceed that authority, when you absolutely bargained with him for a woman without his knowledge, whom you yourself never saw, and whom, if you had seen and known as well as I, it must have been madness in you, to have ever thought of bringing into your family.’

‘Still I own my nephew in a fault; but surely, it is not an unpardonable fault. He hath acted, indeed, without your consent, in a matter in which he ought to have asked it; but it is in a matter in which his interest is principally concerned: you yourself must and will acknowledge, that you consulted his interest only; and if he unfortunately differed from you, and hath been mistaken in his notion of happiness, will you, brother, if you love your son, carry him still wider from the point? Will you increase the ill consequences of his simple choice? Will you endeavour to make an event certain misery to him, which may accidentally prove so? In a word, brother, because he hath put it out of your power to make his circumstances as affluent as you would, will you distress them as much as you can?’

By the force of the true catholic faith, St. Antony won upon the fishes. Orpheus and Amphion went a little farther; and by the charms of music, enchanted things merely inanimate. Wonderful both! But neither history nor fable have ever yet ventured to record an instance of any one, who, by force of argument and reason, hath triumphed over habitual avarice.

Mr. Nightingale, the father, instead of attempting to answer his brother, contented himself with only observing, that they had always differed in their sentiments concerning the education of their children. ‘I wish,’ said he,

‘brother, you would have confined your care to your own daughter, and never have troubled yourself with my son; who hath, I believe, as little profited by your precepts, as by your example:’ for young Nightingale was his uncle’s godson, and had lived more with him than with his father: so that the uncle had often declared, he loved his nephew almost equally with his own child.

Jones fell into raptures with this good gentleman; and when, after much persuasion, they found the father grew still more and more irritated, instead of appeased, Jones conducted the uncle to his nephew at the house of Mrs. Miller.

CHAP. IX.

CONTAINING STRANGE MATTERS.

AT his return to his lodgings, Jones found the situation of affairs greatly altered from what they had been in at his departure. The mother, the two daughters, and young Mr. Nightingale, were now sat down to supper together, when the uncle was at his own desire, introduced without any ceremony into the company; to all of whom he was well known, for he had several times visited his nephew at that house.

The old gentleman immediately walked up to Miss Nancy, saluted and wished her joy, as he did afterwards the mother and the other sister; and lastly, he paid the proper compliments to his nephew, with the same good humour and courtesy, as if his nephew had married his equal or superior in fortune, with all the previous requisites first performed.

Miss Nancy and her supposed husband both turned pale, and looked rather foolish than otherwise on the occasion; but Mrs. Miller took the first opportunity of withdrawing; and having sent for Jones into the dining-room, she threw herself at his feet, and in a most passionate flood of tears, called him her good angel, the preserver of her poor little family, with many other respectful and endearing appellations, and made him every acknowledgment which the highest benefit can extract from the most grateful heart.

After the first gust of her passion was a little

a little over, which she declared, if she had not vented, would have burst her, she proceeded to inform Mr. Jones, that all matters were settled between Mr. Nightingale and her daughter, and that they were to be married the next morning; at which Mr. Jones having expressed much pleasure, the poor woman fell again into a fit of joy and thanksgiving, which he at length with difficulty silenced; and prevailed on her to return with him back to the company, whom they found in the same good humour in which they had left them.

This little society now passed two or three very agreeable hours together; in which the uncle, who was a very great lover of his bottle, had so well plied his nephew, that this latter, though not drunk, began to be somewhat flustered: and now Mr. Nightingale, taking the old gentleman with him up stairs, into the apartment he had lately occupied, unbosomed himself as follows.

'As you have been always the best and kindest of uncles to me, and as you have shewn such unparalleled goodness in forgiving this match, which, to be sure, may be thought a little improvident; I should never forgive myself, if I attempted to deceive you in any thing.' He then confessed the truth, and opened the whole affair.

'How, Jack!' said the old gentleman, 'and are you really then not married to this young woman?'—'No, upon my honour,' answered Nightingale. 'I have told you the simple truth.'—'My dear boy,' cries the uncle, kissing him, 'I am heartily glad to hear it. I never was better pleased in my life. If you had been married, I should have assisted you as much as was in my power, to have made the best of a bad matter; but there is a great difference between considering a thing which is already done and irrecoverable, and that which is yet to do. Let your reason have fair play, Jack; and you will see this match in so foolish and preposterous a light, that there will be no need of any dissuasive arguments.'—'How, Sir!' replies young Nightingale, 'is there this difference between having already done an act,

and being in honour engaged to do it?'—'Pugh!' said the uncle, 'honour is a creature of the world's making; and the world hath the power of a creator over it, and may govern and direct it as they please. Now, you well know how trivial these breaches of contract are thought; even the grossest make but the wonder and conversation of a day. Is there a man who will be afterwards more backward in giving you his sister or daughter? Or is there any sister or daughter who would be more backward to receive you? Honour is not concerned in these engagements.'—'Pardon me, dear Sir,' cries Nightingale, 'I can never think so; and not only honour, but conscience and humanity are concerned. I am well satisfied, that was I now to disappoint the young creature, her death would be the consequence, and I should look on myself as her murderer; nay, as her murderer by the cruelest of all methods—by breaking her heart.'—'Break her heart, indeed! no, no, Jack,' cries the uncle, 'the hearts of women are not so soon broke; they are tough, boy, they are tough.'—'But, Sir,' answered Nightingale, 'my own affections are engaged; and I never could be happy with any other woman. How often have I heard you say, that children should be always suffered to chuse for themselves, and that you would let my cousin Harriet do so!'—'Why, ay,' replied the old gentleman, 'so I would have them; but then I would have them chuse wisely. Indeed, Jack, you must and shall leave this girl.'—'Indeed, uncle,' cries the other, 'I must and will have her.'—'You will, young gentleman!' said the uncle; 'I did not expect such a word from you. I should not wonder if you had used such language to your father, who hath always treated you like a dog, and kept you at the distance which a tyrant preserves over his subjects; but I, who have lived with you upon an equal footing, might surely expect better usage: but I know how to account for it all! It is all owing to your preposterous education, in which I have had too little share. There is my daughter, now, whom I have

‘I have brought up as my friend, never doth any thing without my advice, nor ever refuses to take it, when I give it her. — You have never yet given her advice in an affair of this kind,’ said Nightingale; ‘for I am greatly mistaken in my cousin, if she would be very ready to obey even your most positive commands in abandoning her inclinations. — Don’t abuse my girl,’ answered the old gentleman, with some emotion; ‘don’t abuse my Harriet! I have brought her up to have no inclinations contrary to my own. By suffering her to do whatever she pleases, I have inured her to a habit of being pleased to do whatever I like. — Pardon me, Sir,’ said Nightingale, ‘I have not the least design to reflect on my cousin, for whom I have the greatest esteem; and, indeed, I am convinced you will never put her to so severe a trial, or lay such hard commands on her, as you would do on me. But, dear Sir, let us return to the company; for they will begin to be uneasy at our long absence. I must beg one favour of my dear uncle; which is, that he would not say any thing to shock the poor girl or her mother.’ — ‘O you need not fear me!’ answered he, ‘I understand myself too well to affront women; so I will readily grant you that favour; and, in return, I must expect another of you.’ — ‘There are but few of your commands, Sir,’ said Nightingale, ‘which I shall not very cheerfully obey.’ — ‘Nay, Sir, I ask nothing,’ said the uncle, ‘but the honour of your company home to my lodging, that I may reason the case a little more fully with you: for I would, if possible, have the satisfaction of preserving my family, notwithstanding the headstrong folly of my brother, who, in his own opinion, is the wisest man in the whole world.’

Nightingale, who well knew his uncle to be as headstrong as his father, submitted to attend him home; and then they both returned back into the room, where the old gentleman promised to carry himself with the same decorum which he had before maintained.

CHAP. X.

A SHORT CHAPTER, WHICH CONCLUDES THE BOOK.

THE long absence of the uncle and nephew had occasioned some disquiet in the minds of all whom they had left behind them; and the more, as during the preceding dialogue, the uncle had more than once elevated his voice, so as to be heard down stairs; which, though they could not distinguish what he said, had caused some evil foreboding in Nancy and her mother, and even in Jones himself.

When the good company therefore again assembled, there was a visible alteration in all their faces; and the good humour which, at their last meeting, universally shone forth in every countenance, was now changed into a much less agreeable aspect. It was a change, indeed, common enough to the weather in this climate, from sunshine to clouds, from June to December.

This alteration was not, however, greatly remarked by any present; for as they were all now endeavouring to conceal their own thoughts, and to act a part, they became all too busily engaged in the scene to be spectators of it. Thus, neither the uncle nor nephew saw any symptoms of suspicion in the mother or daughter; nor did the mother or daughter remark the over-acted complaisance of the old man, nor the counterfeit satisfaction which grinned in the features of the young one.

Something like this, I believe, frequently happens, where the whole attention of two friends being engaged in the part which each is to act, in order to impose on the other, neither sees nor suspects the art practised against himself; and thus the thrust of both (to borrow no improper metaphor on the occasion) alike takes place.

From the same reason, it is no unusual thing for both parties to be overreached in a bargain, though the one must be always the greater loser; as was he who sold a blind horse, and received a bad note in payment.

Our company, in about half an hour, broke up, and the uncle carried off his nephew; but not before the latter had

assured Miss Nancy, in a whisper, that he would attend her early in the morning, and fulfil all his engagements.

Jones, who was the least concerned in this scene, saw the most. He did indeed suspect the very fact; for, besides observing the great alteration in the behaviour of the uncle, the distance he assumed, and his over-strained civility to Miss Nancy; the carrying off a bridegroom from his bride at that time of night, was so extraordinary a proceeding, that it could be only accounted for, by imagining that young Nightingale had revealed the whole truth; which the apparent openness of his temper, and his being flustered with liquor, made too probable.

While he was reasoning with himself, whether he should acquaint these

poor people with his suspicion, the maid of the house informed him, that a gentlewoman desired to speak with him. He went immediately out, and taking the candle from the maid, ushered his visitant up stairs; who, in the person of Mrs. Honour, acquainted him with such dreadful news concerning his Sophia, that he immediately lost all consideration for every other person; and his whole stock of compassion was entirely swallowed up in reflections on his own misery, and on that of his unfortunate angel.

What this dreadful matter was, the reader will be informed, after we have first related the many preceding steps which produced it; and those will be the subject of the following book.

END OF THE FOURTEENTH BOOK.



THE
HISTORY
OF A
FOUNDLING.

BOOK XV.

IN WHICH THE HISTORY ADVANCES ABOUT TWO DAYS.

CHAP. I.

TOO SHORT TO NEED A PREFACE.

HERE is a set of religious, or rather moral writers, who teach that virtue is the certain road to happiness; and vice to misery, in this world. A very wholesome and comfortable doctrine; and to which we have but one objection, namely, that it is not true.

Indeed, if by virtue these writers mean, the exercise of those cardinal virtues, which, like good housewives, stay at home, and mind only the business of their own family, I shall very readily concede the point; for so surely do all these contribute and lead to happiness, that I could almost wish, in violation of all the ancient and modern fables, to call them rather by the name of wisdom, than by that of virtue; for, with regard to this life, no system, I conceive, was ever wiser, than that of the ancient Epicureans, who held this wisdom to constitute the chief good; nor foolisher, than that of their opposites, those modern Epicures, who place

all felicity in the abundant gratification of every sensual appetite.

But if by virtue is meant (as I almost think it ought) a certain relative quality, which is always busying itself without doors, and seems as much interested in pursuing the good of others as it's own; I cannot so easily agree that this is the surest way to human happiness; because I am afraid we must then include poverty and contempt, with all the mischiefs which backbiting, envy, and ingratitude, can bring on mankind, in our idea of happiness: nay, sometimes, perhaps, we shall be obliged to wait upon the said happiness to a gaol; since many, by the above virtue, have brought themselves thither.

I have not now leisure to enter upon so large a field of speculation, as here seems opening upon me: my design was, to wipe off a doctrine that lay in my way; since, while Mr. Jones was acting the most virtuous part imaginable, in labouring to preserve his fellow-creatures from destruction, the devil, or some other evil spirit, one perhaps clothed in human flesh, was hard at work to make him completely miserable in the ruin of his Sophia.

This, therefore, would seem an exception to the above rule, if, indeed, it was a rule; but as we have, in our voyage through life, seen so many other exceptions to it, we chuse to dispute the doctrine on which it is founded; which we do not apprehend to be christian, which we are convinced is not true, and which is, indeed, destructive of one of the noblest arguments that reason alone can furnish for the belief of immortality.

But as the reader's curiosity (if he hath any) must be now awake, and hungry, we shall provide to feed it as fast as we can.

CHAP. II.

IN WHICH IS OPENED A VERY BLACK DESIGN AGAINST SOPHIA.

I Remember a wise old gentleman, who used to say, 'When children are doing nothing, they are doing mischief.' I will not enlarge this quaint saying to the most beautiful part of the creation in general; but so far I may be allowed, that when the effects of female jealousy do not appear openly in their proper colours of rage and fury, we may suspect that mischievous passion to be at work privately, and attempting to undermine what it doth not attack above ground.

This was exemplified in the conduct of Lady Bellaston; who, under all the smiles which she wore in her countenance, concealed much indignation against Sophia; and as she plainly saw, that this young lady stood between her and the full indulgence of her desires, she resolved to get rid of her by some means or other; nor was it long before a very favourable opportunity of accomplishing this, presented itself to her.

The reader may be pleased to remember, that when Sophia was thrown into that confinement at the play-house, by the wit and humour of a set of young gentlemen who call themselves the Town; we informed him, that she had put herself under the protection of a young nobleman, who had very safely conducted her to her chair.

This nobleman, who frequently vi-

sited Lady Bellaston, had more than once seen Sophia there, since her arrival in town, and had conceived a very great liking to her; which liking (as beauty never looks more amiable than in distress) Sophia had in this fright so encreased, that he might now, without any great impropriety, be said to be actually in love with her.

It may easily be believed, that he would not suffer so handsome an occasion of improving his acquaintance with the beloved object as now offered itself, to elapse; when even good-breeding alone might have prompted him to pay her a visit.

The next morning, therefore, after this accident, he waited on Sophia, with the usual compliments, and hopes that she had received no harm from her last night's adventure.

As love, like fire, when once thoroughly kindled, is soon blown into a flame, Sophia, in a very short time, completed her conquest. Time now flew away unperceived, and the noble lord had been two hours in company with the lady, before it entered into his head that he had made too long a visit. Though this circumstance alone would have alarmed Sophia, who was somewhat more a mistress of computation at present, she had, indeed, much more pregnant evidence from the eyes of her lover of what passed within his bosom: nay, though he did not make any open declaration of his passion, yet many of his expressions were rather too warm, and too tender, to have been imputed to complaisance, even in the age when such complaisance was in fashion; the very reverse of which is well known to be the reigning mode at present.

Lady Bellaston had been apprized of his lordship's visit at his first arrival; and the length of it very well satisfied her, that things went as she wished; and as, indeed, she had suspected, the second time she saw this young couple together. This business, she rightly, I think, concluded, that she should by no means forward by mixing in the company, while they were together: she, therefore, ordered her servants, that when my lord was going, they should tell him, she desired to speak with him; and employed the intermediate time in meditating how best to accomplish a scheme, which she made no doubt but his

his lordship would very readily embrace the execution of.

Lord Fellamar (for that was the title of this young nobleman) was no sooner introduced to her ladyship, than she attacked him in the following strain, 'Bless me, my lord! are you here yet? I thought my servants had made a mistake, and let you go away; and I wanted to see you about an affair of some importance.'—'Indeed, Lady Bellafton,' said he, 'I don't wonder you are astonished at the length of my visit: for I have staid above two hours, and I did not think I had staid above half a one.'—'What am I to conclude from thence, my lord?' said she. 'The company must be very agreeable, which can make time slide away so very deceitfully.'—'Upon my honour,' said he, 'the most agreeable I ever saw. Pray tell me, Lady Bellafton, who is this blazing star which you have produced among us all of a sudden?'—'What blazing star, my lord!' said she, affecting a surprize. 'I mean,' said he, 'the lady I saw here the other day, whom I had last night in my arms at the play-house, and to whom I have been making that unreasonable visit.'—'O, my cousin Western!' said she. 'Why, that blazing star, my lord, is the daughter of a country booby squire, and hath been in town about a fortnight, for the first time.'—'Upon my soul,' said he, 'I should swear she had been bred in a court; for, besides her beauty, I never saw any thing so genteel, so sensible, so polite.'—'O brave!' cries the lady, 'my cousin hath you, I find.'—'Upon my honour,' answered he, 'I wish she had: for I am in love with her to distraction.'—'Nay, my lord,' said she, 'it is not wishing yourself very ill neither, for she is a very great fortune: I assure you, she is an only child, and her father's estate is a good three thousand a year.'—'Then I can assure you, Madam,' answered the lord, 'I think her the best match in England.'—'Indeed, my lord,' replied she, 'if you like her, I heartily wish you had her.'—'If you think so kindly of me, Madam,' said he, 'as she is a relation of yours, will you do me the honour to propose it to her father?'—'And

are you really then in earnest?' cries the lady, with an affected gravity. 'I hope, Madam,' answered he, 'you have a better opinion of me, than to imagine I would jest with your ladyship in an affair of this kind.'—'Indeed, then,' said the lady, 'I will most readily propose your lordship to her father; and I can, I believe, assure you of his joyful acceptance of the proposal; but there is a bar, which I am almost ashamed to mention; and yet it is one you will never be able to conquer. You have a rival, my lord; and a rival who, though I blush to name him, neither you, nor all the world will ever be able to conquer!'—'Upon my word, Lady Bellafton,' cries he, 'you have struck a damp to my heart, which hath almost deprived me of being.'—'Fie! my lord,' said she, 'I should rather hope I had struck fire into you. A lover! and talk of damps in your heart! I rather imagined you would have asked your rival's name, that you might have immediately entered the lists with him.'—'I promise you, Madam,' answered he, 'there are very few things I would not undertake for your charming cousin: but pray, who is this happy man?'—'Why, he is,' said she, 'what I am sorry to say most happy men with us are, one of the lowest fellows in the world. He is a beggar, a bastard, a foundling, a fellow in meaner circumstances than one of your lordship's footmen.'—'And is it possible,' cried he, 'that a young creature with such perfections, should think of bestowing herself so unworthily?'—'Alas! my lord,' answered she, 'consider the country—the bane of all young women is the country. There they learn a set of romantick notions of love, and I know not what folly, which this town, and good company, can scarce eradicate in a whole winter.'—'Indeed, Madam,' replied my lord, 'your cousin is of too immense a value to be thrown away: such ruin as this must be prevented.'—'Alas!' cries she, 'my lord, how can it be prevented? The family have already done all in their power; but the girl is, I think, intoxicated, and nothing less than ruin will content her. And to deat more openly

with

‘with you, I expect every day to hear she is run away with him.’—‘What you tell me, Lady Bellafton,’ answered his lordship, ‘affects me moft tenderly; and only raifes my compaffion, inftead of leffening my adoration of your coufin. Some means muft be found to preferve fo inestimable a jewel. Hath your ladyship endeavoured to reason with her?’ Here the lady affected a laugh, and cried, ‘My dear lord, fure you know us better than to talk of reasoning a young woman out of her inclinations? Thefe inestimable jewels are as deaf as the jewels they wear; time, my lord, time is the only medicine to cure their folly; but this is a medicine, which I am certain she will not take; nay, I live in hourly horrors on her account. In fhort, nothing but violent methods will do.’—‘What is to be done?’ cries my lord, ‘What methods are to be taken?—Is there any method upon earth?—O Lady Bellafton! there is nothing which I would not undertake for fuch a reward.’—‘I really know not,’ answered the lady, after a pause: and then paufing again, she cried out—‘Upon my foul, I am at my wit’s end on this girl’s account. If she can be preserved, something muft be done immediately; and, as I fay, nothing but violent methods will do. If your lordship hath really this attachment to my coufin (and to do her juftice, except in this filly inclination, of which she will foon fee her folly, she is every way deferving) I think there may be one way, indeed; it is a very disagreeable one, and what I am almoft afraid to think of. It requires great fpirit, I promife you.’—‘I am not confcious, Madam,’ faid he, ‘of any defect there; nor am I, I hope, fufpected of any fuch. It muft be an egregious defect, indeed, which could make me backward on this occafion.’—‘Nay, my lord,’ answered she, ‘I am far from doubting you. I am much more inclined to doubt my own courage; for I muft run a monftrous rifque. In fhort, I muft place fuch a confidence in your honour, as a wife woman will fcarce ever place in a man on any confideration.’ In this point, likewise, my lord very well fatisfied her; for his

reputation was extremely clear, and common fame did him no more than juftice, in fpeaking well of him. ‘Well then,’ faid she, ‘my lord—I—’—‘I vow, I can’t bear the apprehenfion of it. No; it muft not be: at leaft every other method fhall be tried. Can you get rid of your engagements, and dine here to-day? Your lordship will have an opportunity of feeing a little more of Mifs Western. I promife you, we have no time to lofe. Here will be nobody but Lady Betty, and Mifs Eagle, and Colonel Hamftead, and Tom Edwards; they will all go foon, and I fhall be at home to nobody: then your lordship may be a little more explicit. Nay, I will contrive fome method to convince you of her attachment to this fellow.’ My lord made proper compliments, accepted the invitation, and then they parted to dress; it being now paff three in the morning, or to reckon by the old ftyle, in the afternoon.

CHAP. III.

A FARTHER EXPLANATION OF THE FOREGOING DESIGN.

THOUGH the reader may have long fince concluded Lady Bellafton to be a member (and no inconfiderable one) of the great world, she was, in reality, a very confiderable member of the little world; by which appellation was diftinguifhed, a very worthy and honourable fociety, which not long fince flourifhed in this kingdom.

Among other good principles upon which this fociety was founded, there was one very remarkable: for, as it was a rule of an honourable club of heroes, who affembled at the clofe of the late war, that all the members fhould every day fight once at leaft; fo, it was in this, that every member fhould, within the twenty-four hours, tell at leaft one merry fib, which was to be propagated by all the brethren and fiftershood.

Many idle ftories were told about this fociety, which from a certain quality may be, perhaps not unjuftly, fupposed to have come from the fociety themfelves: as, that the devil was the

pre-

president; and that he sat in person in an elbow chair at the upper end of the table: but upon very strict enquiry, I find there is not the least truth in any of those tales; and that the assembly consisted in reality of a set of very good sort of people; and the fibs which they propagated were of a harmless kind, and tended only to produce mirth and good humour.

Edwards was likewise a member of this comical society. To him therefore Lady Bellafton applied as a proper instrument for her purpose, and furnished him with a fib, which he was to vent whenever the lady gave him her cue; and this was not to be till the evening, when all the company but Lord Fellamar and himself were gone, and while they were engaged in a rubbers at whist.

To this time then, which was between seven and eight in the evening, we will convey our reader; when Lady Bellafton, Lord Fellamar, Miss Western, and Tom, being engaged at whist, and in the last game of their rubbers, Tom received his cue from Lady Bellafton, which was; 'I protest, Tom, you are grown intolerable lately; you used to tell us all the news of the town, and now you know no more of the world than if you lived out of it.'

Mr. Edwards then began as follows. 'The fault is not mine, Madam; it lies in the dulness of the age, that doth nothing worth talking of. O-l-a! though now I think on't, there hath a terrible accident befallen poor Colonel Wilcox.—Poor Ned!—You know him, my lord; every body knows him; faith, I am very much concerned for him!'

'What is it, pray?' says Lady Bellafton.

'Why, he hath killed a man this morning in a duel, that's all.'

His lordship, who was not in the secret, asked gravely, whom he had killed. To which Edwards answered, 'A young fellow we none of us know; a Somersetshire lad just come to town; one Jones his name is; a near relation to one Mr. Allworthy, of whom your lordship, I believe, hath heard. I saw the lad lie dead in a coffee-house.—Upon my soul, he is one of the finest corpses I ever saw in my life!'

Sophia, who just began to deal as Tom had mentioned that a man was killed, stopped her hand, and listened with attention (for all stories of that kind affected her;—) but no sooner had he arrived at the latter part of the story, than she began to deal again; and having dealt three cards to one, and seven to another, and ten to a third, at last dropped the rest from her hand, and fell back in her chair.

The company behaved as usually on these occasions. The usual disturbance ensued, the usual assistance was summoned, and Sophia, at last, as it is usual, returned again to life; and was soon after, at her earnest desire, led to her own apartment; where, at my lord's request, Lady Bellafton acquainted her with the truth, attempted to carry it off as a jest of her own, and comforted her with repeated assurances, that neither his lordship, nor Tom, though she had taught him the story, were in the true secret of the affair.

There was no farther evidence necessary to convince Lord Fellamar how justly the case had been represented to him by Lady Bellafton; and now, at her return into the room, a scheme was laid between these two noble persons, which, though it appeared in no very heinous light to his lordship (as he faithfully promised, and faithfully resolved too, to make the lady all the subsequent amends in his power by marriage;) yet many of our readers, we doubt not, will see with just detestation.

The next evening, at seven, was appointed for the fatal purpose; when Lady Bellafton undertook that Sophia should be alone, and his lordship should be introduced to her. The whole family were to be regulated for the purpose, most of the servants dispatched out of the house; and for Mrs. Honour, who, to prevent suspicion, was to be left with her mistress till his lordship's arrival, Lady Bellafton herself was to engage her in an apartment as distant as possible from the scene of the intended mischief, and out of the hearing of Sophia.

Matters being thus agreed on, his lordship took his leave, and her ladyship retired to rest, highly pleased with a project, of which she had no reason to doubt the success; and which promised so effectually to remove Sophia from

from being any future obstruction to her amour with Jones, by a means of which she should never appear to be guilty, even if the fact appeared to the world: but this she made no doubt of preventing, by huddling up a marriage, to which she thought the ravished Sophia would easily be brought to consent, and at which all the rest of her family would rejoice.

But affairs were not in so quiet a situation in the bosom of the other conspirator: his mind was tossed in all the distracting anxiety so nobly described by Shakespeare.

‘Between the acting of a dreadful thing,
‘And the first motion, all the interim is
‘Like a phantasma, or a hideous dream:
‘The genius and the mortal instruments
‘Are then in council; and the state of
‘man,
‘Like to a little kingdom, suffers then
‘The nature of an insurrection.’

Though the violence of his passion had made him eagerly embrace the first hint of this design, especially as it came from a relation of the lady, yet when that friend to reflection, a pillow, had placed the action itself in all its natural black colours before his eyes, with all the consequences which must, and those which might probably attend it; his resolution began to abate, or rather, indeed, to go over to the other side: and after a long conflict, which lasted a whole night, between honour and appetite, the former at length prevailed, and he determined to wait on Lady Bellafton, and to relinquish the design.

Lady Bellafton was in bed, though very late in the morning, and Sophia sitting by her bed-side, when the servant acquainted her that Lord Fellamar was below in the parlour; upon which her ladyship desired him to stay, and that she would see him presently: but the servant was no sooner departed, than poor Sophia began to entreat her cousin not to encourage the visits of that odious lord (so she called him, though a little unjustly) upon her account. ‘I see his design,’ said she; ‘for he made downright love to me yesterday morning; but as I am resolved never to admit it, I beg your ladyship not to leave us alone together any more; and to order the servants that, if he enquires for me, I may be always denied to him.’

‘La! child,’ says Lady Bellafton, ‘you country girls have nothing but sweethearts in your heads; you fancy every man who is civil to you is making love. He is one of the most gallant young fellows about town, and I am convinced means no more than a little gallantry. Make love to you indeed! I wish with all my heart he would; and you must be an arrant mad woman to refuse him!’

‘But as I shall certainly be that mad woman,’ cries Sophia, ‘I hope his visits will not be intruded upon me.’

‘O child!’ said Lady Bellafton, ‘you need not be so fearful; if you resolve to run away with that Jones, I know no person who can hinder you.’

‘Upon my honour, Madam,’ cries Sophia, ‘your ladyship injures me. I will never run away with any man; nor will I ever marry contrary to my father’s inclinations.’

‘Well, Miss Western,’ said the lady, ‘if you are not in a humour to see company this morning, you may retire to your own apartment; for I am not frightened at his lordship, and must send for him up into my dressing-room.’

Sophia thanked her ladyship, and withdrew; and presently afterwards Fellamar was admitted up stairs.

CHAP. IV.

BY WHICH IT WILL APPEAR HOW DANGEROUS AN ADVOCATE A LADY IS, WHEN SHE APPLIES HER ELOQUENCE TO AN ILL PURPOSE.

WHEN Lady Bellafton heard the young lord’s scruples, she treated them with the same disdain with which one of those sages of the law, called Newgate solicitors, treats the qualms of conscience in a young witness. ‘My dear lord,’ said she, ‘you certainly want a cordial! I must send to Lady Edgely for one of her best drams. Fie upon it! have more resolution. Are you frightened by the word *rape*? or are you apprehensive—Well! if the story of Helen was modern, I should think it unnatural: I mean, the behaviour of Paris, not the fondness of the lady; for,

for all women love a man of spirit. There is another story of the Sabine ladies—and that too, I thank Heaven, is very ancient. Your lordship, perhaps, will admire my reading; but I think Mr. Hook tells us, they made tolerable good wives afterwards. I fancy few of my married acquaintances were ravished by their husbands.—‘Nay, dear Lady Bellaston,’ cried he, ‘don’t ridicule me in this manner.’—‘Why, my good lord,’ answered she, ‘do you think any woman in England would not laugh at you in her heart, whatever prudery she might wear in her countenance? You force me to use a strange kind of language, and to betray my sex most abominably; but I am contented with knowing my intentions are good, and that I am endeavouring to serve my cousin; for I think you will make her a husband notwithstanding this; or, upon my soul, I would not even persuade her to fling herself away upon an empty title. She should not upbraid me hereafter with having lost a man of spirit; for that his enemies allow this poor young fellow to be.’

Let those who have had the satisfaction of hearing reflections of this kind from a wife or a mistress, declare whether they are at all sweetened by coming from a female tongue. Certain it is, they sunk deeper into his lordship, than any thing which Demosthenes or Cicero could have said on the occasion.

Lady Bellaston, perceiving she had fired the young lord’s pride, began now, like a true orator, to rouse other passions to its assistance. ‘My lord,’ says she, in a graver voice, ‘you will be pleased to remember, you mentioned this matter to me first; for I would not appear to you in the light of one who is endeavouring to put off my cousin upon you. Four score thousand pounds do not stand in need of an advocate to recommend them.’—‘Nor doth Miss Western,’ said he, ‘require any recommendation from her fortune; for, in my opinion, no woman ever had half her charms.’—‘Yes, yes, my lord,’ replied the lady, looking in the glass, ‘there have been women with more than half her charms, I assure you! not that I need lessen her on that account: she is a most delicious girl, that’s certain;

and within these few hours she will be in the arms of one, who surely doth not deserve her; though I will give him his due, I believe he is truly a man of spirit.’

‘I hope so, Madam,’ said my lord; though I must own he doth not deserve her; for unless Heaven or your ladyship disappoint me, she shall within that time be in mine!’

‘Well spoken, my lord,’ answered the lady; ‘I promise you no disappointment shall happen from my side; and within this week I am convinced I shall call your lordship my cousin in publick.’

The remainder of this scene consisted entirely of raptures, excuses, and compliments, very pleasant to have heard from the parties; but rather dull when related at second hand. Here, therefore, we shall put an end to this dialogue, and hasten to the fatal hour, when every thing was prepared for the destruction of poor Sophia.

But this being the most tragical matter in our whole history, we shall treat it in a chapter by itself.

CHAP. V.

CONTAINING SOME MATTERS WHICH MAY AFFECT, AND OTHERS WHICH MAY SURPRIZE THE READER.

THE clock had now struck seven; and poor Sophia, alone and melancholy, sat reading a tragedy. It was *The Fatal Marriage*; and she was now come to that part where the poor distressed Isabella disposes of her wedding ring.

Here the book dropt from her hand, and a shower of tears ran down into her bosom. In this situation she had continued a minute, when the door opened, and in came Lord Fellamar. Sophia started from her chair at his entrance; and his lordship advancing forwards, and making a low bow, said, ‘I am afraid, Miss Western, I break in upon you abruptly.’—‘Indeed, my lord,’ says she, ‘I must own myself a little surprized at this unexpected visit.’—‘If this visit be unexpected,’ Madam,’ answered Lord Fellamar, ‘my eyes must have been very faithless interpreters of my heart,

heart, when last I had the honour of seeing you: for surely you could not otherwise have hoped to detain my heart in your possession, without receiving a visit from its owner. Sophia, confused as she was, answered this bombast (and very properly, I think) with a look of inconceivable disdain. My lord then made another and a longer speech of the same sort. Upon which Sophia, trembling, said, 'Am I really to conceive your lordship to be out of your senses? Sure, my lord, there is no other excuse for such behaviour.'—'I am, indeed, Madam, in the situation you suppose,' cries his lordship; 'and sure you will pardon the effects of a phrenzy which you yourself have occasioned: for love hath so totally deprived me of reason, that I am scarce accountable for any of my actions.'—'Upon my word, my lord,' said Sophia, 'I neither understand your words nor your behaviour.'—'Suffer me then, Madam,' cries he, 'at your feet to explain both, by laying open my soul to you; and declaring that I doat on you to the highest degree of distraction. O most adorable! most divine creature! what language can express the sentiments of my heart!'—'I do assure you, my lord,' said Sophia, 'I shall not stay to hear any more of this.'—'Do not,' cries he, 'think of leaving me thus cruelly: could you know half the torments which I feel, that tender bosom must pity what those eyes have caused.' Then fetching a deep sigh, and laying hold of her hand, he ran on for some minutes in a strain which would be little more pleasing to the reader than it was to the lady; and at last concluded with a declaration, that if he was master of the world, he would lay it at her feet. Sophia then forcibly pulling away her hand from his, answered with much spirit, 'I promise you, Sir, your world and its matter, I should spurn from me with equal contempt.' She then offered to go, and Lord Fellamar again laying hold of her hand, said, 'Pardon me, my beloved angel, freedoms which nothing but despair could have tempted me to take. Believe me, could I have had any hope that my title and fortune, neither of them inconsiderable, unless when compared with your worth,

would have been accepted, I had, in the humblest manner, presented them to your acceptance. But I cannot lose you—by Heaven, I will sooner part with my soul! You are, you must, you shall be only mine!—'My lord,' said she, 'I entreat you to desist from a vain pursuit; for, upon my honour, I will never hear you on this subject. Let go my hand, my lord; for I am resolved to go from you this moment; nor will I ever see you more!—'Then, Madam,' cries his lordship, 'I must make the best use of this moment; for, I cannot, nor will not, live without you!—'What do you mean, my lord?' said Sophia; 'I will raise the family!—'I have no fear, Madam,' answered he, 'but of losing you; and that I am resolved to prevent, the only way which despair points to me.' He then caught her in his arms—upon which she screamed so loud, that she must have alarmed some one to her assistance, had not Lady Bellaston taken care to remove all ears.

But a more lucky circumstance happened for poor Sophia: another noise now broke forth, which almost drowned her cries; for now the whole house rung with, 'Where is she? D—n me, I'll unkenne! her this instant! Shew me her chamber, I say; where is my daughter? I know she's in the house, and I'll see her if she's above ground! Shew me where she is!' At which last words the door flew open, and in came Squire Western, with his parson, and a set of myrmidons at his heels.

How miserable must have been the condition of poor Sophia, when the enraged voice of her father was welcome to her ears! Welcome, indeed, it was; and luckily did he come: for it was the only accident upon earth which could have preserved the peace of her mind from being for ever destroyed.

Sophia, notwithstanding her fright, presently knew her father's voice; and his lordship, notwithstanding his passion, knew the voice of reason, which peremptorily assured him, it was not now a time for the perpetration of his villainy. Hearing, therefore, the voice approach, and hearing likewise whose it was; (for as the squire more than once roared forth the word daughter, so Sophia, in the midst of her struggling,

ging, cried out upon her father; he thought proper to relinquish his prey, having only disordered her handkerchief, and with his rude lips committed violence on her lovely neck.

If the reader's imagination doth not assist me, I shall never be able to describe the situation of these two persons when Western came into the room. Sophia tottered into a chair, where she sat disordered, pale, breathless, bursting with indignation at Lord Fellamar; affrighted, and yet more rejoiced at the arrival of her father.

His lordship sat down near her, with the bag of his wig hanging over one of his shoulders, the rest of his dress being somewhat disordered, and rather a greater proportion of linen than is usual appearing at his bosom. As to the rest, he was amazed, affrighted, vexed, and ashamed.

As to Squire Western, he happened, at this time, to be overtaken by an enemy, which very frequently pursues, and seldom fails to overtake, most of the country gentlemen in this kingdom. He was, literally speaking, drunk; which circumstance, together with his natural impetuosity, could produce no other effect, than his running immediately up to his daughter, upon whom he fell foul with his tongue in the most inveterate manner; nay, he had probably committed violence with his hands, had not the parson interposed, saying, 'For Heaven's sake, Sir, advert that you are in the house of a great lady. Let me beg you to mitigate your wrath; it should minister a fulness of satisfaction, that you have found your daughter; for as to revenge, it belongeth not unto us. I discern great contrition in the countenance of the young lady. I stand assured, if you will forgive her, she will repent her of all past offences, and return unto her duty.'

The strength of the parson's arms had at first been of more service than the strength of his rhetoric. However, his last words wrought some effect; and the squire answered, 'I'll forgive her, if she wull ha' un.—If wot ha' un, Sophy, I'll forgive thee all. Why dost unt speak? Shat ha' un! D—n me, shat ha' un! Why dost unt answer? Was ever such a stubborn tuoad?' 'Let me intreat you, Sir, to be a

'little more moderate,' said the parson; 'you frighten the young lady so, that you deprive her of all power of utterance.'

'Power of mine a—e!' answered the squire. 'You take her part then, you do? A pretty parson truly, to side with an undutiful child! Yes, yes, I will gee you a living with a pox. I'll gee un to the devil sooner!'

'I humbly crave your pardon,' said the parson; 'I assure your worship, I meant no such matter.'

My Lady Bellaston now entered the room, and came up to the squire; who no sooner saw her, than resolving to follow the instructions of his sister, he made her a very civil bow, in the rural manner, and paid her some of his best compliments. He then immediately proceeded to his complaints, and said, 'There, my lady cousin! there stands the most undutiful child in the world: she hankers after a beggarly rascal, and won't marry one of the greatest matches in all England, that we have provided for her.'

'Indeed, Cousin Western,' answered the lady, 'I am persuaded you wrong my cousin. I am sure she hath a better understanding. I am convinced she will not refuse what she must be sensible is so much to her advantage.'

This was a wilful mistake in Lady Bellaston; for she well knew whom Mr. Western meant; though, perhaps, she thought he would easily be reconciled to his lordship's proposals.

'Do you hear there,' quoth the squire, 'what her ladyship says? All your family are for the match. Come, Sophy, be a good girl, and be dutiful, and make your father happy.'

'If my death will make you happy, Sir,' answered Sophia, 'you will shortly be so.'

'It's a lye, Sophy; it's a d—n'd lye, and you know it!' said the squire.

'Indeed, Miss Western,' said Lady Bellaston, 'you injure your father; he hath nothing in view but your interest in this match; and I and all your friends must acknowledge the highest honour done to your family in the proposal.'

'Ay, all of us,' quoth the squire; 'nay, it was no proposal of mine. She knows it was her aunt proposed it to me first.—Come, Sophy, once

'more, let me beg you to be a good girl, and gee me your consent before your cousin.'

'Let me give him your hand, cousin,' said the lady. 'It is the fashion, now-a-days, to dispense with time and long courtships.'

'Pugh,' said the squire, 'what signifies time! wo'n't they have time enough to court afterwards? People may court very well after they have been a-bed together.'

As Lord Fellamar was very well assured, that he was meant by Lady Bellafton, so never having heard nor suspected a word of Blifil, he made no doubt of his being meant by the father. Coming up, therefore, to the squire, he said, 'Though I have not the honour, Sir, of being personally known to you; yet, as I find I have the happiness to have my proposals accepted, let me intercede, Sir, in behalf of the young lady, that she may not be more solicited at this time.'

'You intercede, Sir!' said the squire; 'why, who the devil are you?'

'Sir, I am Lord Fellamar,' answered he; 'and am the happy man, whom I hope you have done the honour of accepting for a son-in-law.'

'You are a son of a b——,' replied the squire, 'for all your laced coat. You my son-in-law, and be d—n'd to you!'

'I shall take more from you, Sir, than from any man,' answered the lord; 'but I must inform you, that I am not used to hear such language without resentment.'

'Resent my a—e,' quoth the squire. 'Don't think I am afraid of such a fellow as thee art! because hast a got a spit there dangling at thy side. Lay by your spit, and I'll give thee enough of meddling with what doth not belong to thee. I'll teach you to father-in-law me! I'll lick thy jacket!'

'It's very well, Sir,' said my lord; 'I shall make no disturbance before the ladies. I am very well satisfied. Your humble servant, Sir—Lady Bellafton, your most obedient.'

His lordship was no sooner gone, than Lady Bellafton, coming up to Mr. Western, said, 'Bless me, Sir! what have you done? you know not whom you have affronted; he is a noble-

man of the first rank and fortune; and yesterday made proposals to your daughter; and such as I am sure you must accept with the highest pleasure.'

'Answer for yourself, lady cousin,' said the squire; 'I will have nothing to do with any of your lords. My daughter shall have an honest country gentleman; I have pitched upon one for her, and she shall ha' un. I am sorry for the trouble she hath given your ladyship with all my heart.' Lady Bellafton made a civil speech upon the word trouble; to which the squire answered, 'Why that's kind! and I would do as much for your ladyship. To be sure, relations should do for one another. So I wish your ladyship a good night. —Come, Madam, you must go along with me by fair means, or I'll have you carried down to the coach.'

Sophia said she would attend him without force; but begged to go in a chair, for she said she should not be able to ride any other way.

'Pr'ythee,' cries the squire, 'wout unt persuade me, canst not ride in a coach, would'st? that's a pretty thing surely! No, no, I'll never let thee out of my sight any more, till art married, that I promise thee.' Sophia told him she saw he was resolved to break her heart. 'O break thy heart, and be d—n'd,' quoth he, 'if a good husband will break it. I don't value a brass varden, not a ha'penny of any undutiful b—— upon earth.' He then took violently hold of her hand; upon which the parson once more interfered, begging him to use gentle methods. At that the squire thundered out a curse, and bid the parson hold his tongue; saying, 'At'n't in pulpit now? when art a got up there, I never mind what dost say; but I won't be priest-ridden, nor taught how to behave myself by thee. —I wish your ladyship a good night. —Come along, Sophy; be a good girl, and all shall be well. Shat ha' un; d—n me, shat ha' un!'

Mrs. Honour appeared below stairs, and with a low curtsy to the squire, offered to attend her mistress; but he pushed her away, saying, 'Hold, Madam, hold; you come no more near my house.' —And will you take my maid away from me? said Sophia.

'Yes,

'Yes, indeed, Madam, will I,' cries the squire: 'you need not fear being without a servant; I will get you another maid, and a better maid than this, who, I'd lay five pound to a crown, is no more a maid than my grannum. No, no, Sophy; she shall contrive no more escapes, I promise you.' He then packed up his daughter and the parson into a hackney coach, after which he mounted himself, and ordered it to drive to his lodgings. In the way thither he suffered Sophia to be quiet, and entertained himself with reading a lecture to the parson on good manners, and a proper behaviour to his betters.

It is possible he might not so easily have carried off his daughter from Lady Bellaston, had that good lady desired to have detained her; but in reality, she was not a little pleased with the confinement into which Sophia was going; and as her project with Lord Fellamar had failed of success, she was well contented that other violent methods were now going to be used in favour of another man.

CHAP. VI.

BY WHAT MEANS THE SQUIRE
CAME TO DISCOVER HIS DAUGHTER.

THOUGH the reader in many histories is obliged to digest much more unaccountable appearances than this of Mr. Western, without any satisfaction at all; yet, as we dearly love to oblige him whenever it is in our power, we shall now proceed to shew by what method the squire discovered where his daughter was.

In the third chapter, then, of the preceding book, we gave a hint (for it is not our custom to unfold at any time more than is necessary for the occasion) that Mrs. Fitzpatrick, who was very desirous of reconciling herself to her uncle and aunt Western, thought she had a probable opportunity, by the service of preserving Sophia from committing the same crime which had drawn on herself the anger of her family. After much deliberation, therefore, she resolved to inform her aunt Western where her cousin was, and ac-

cordingly she writ the following letter, which we shall give the reader at length, for more reasons than one.

HONOURED MADAM,

THE occasion of my writing this, will perhaps make a letter of mine agreeable to my dear aunt, for the sake of one of her nieces; though I have little reason to hope it will be so on the account of another.

Without more apology, as I was coming to throw my unhappy self at your feet, I met, by the strangest accident in the world, my cousin Sophy, whose history you are better acquainted with than myself, though, alas! I know infinitely too much; enough, indeed, to satisfy me, that unless she is immediately prevented, she is in danger of running into the same fatal mischief, which by foolishly and ignorantly refusing your most wise and prudent advice, I have unfortunately brought on myself.

In short, I have seen the man; nay, I was most part of yesterday in his company, and a charming young fellow I promise you he is. By what accident he came acquainted with me, is too tedious to tell you now; but I have this morning changed my lodgings to avoid him, lest he should by my means discover my cousin; for he doth not yet know where she is, and it is adviseable he should not, till my uncle hath secured her. No time therefore is to be lost; and I need only inform you, that she is now with Lady Bellaston, whom I have seen, and who hath, I find, a design of concealing her from her family. You know, Madam, she is a strange woman; but nothing could misbecome me more, than to presume to give any hint to one of your great understanding, and great knowledge of the world, besides barely informing you of the matter of fact.

I hope, Madam, the care which I have shewn on this occasion for the good of my family, will recommend me again to the favour of a lady who hath always exerted so much zeal for the honour and true interest of us

all;

all; and that it may be a means of restoring me to your friendship, which hath made so great a part of my former, and is so necessary to my future happiness. I am, with the utmost respect, honoured Madam, your most dutiful, obliged niece, and most obedient humble servant,

HARRIET FITZPATRICK.

Mrs. Western was now at her brother's house, where she had resided ever since the flight of Sophia, in order to administer comfort to the poor squire in his affliction. Of this comfort, which she doled out to him in daily portions, we have formerly given a specimen.

She was now standing with her back to the fire; and, with a pinch of snuff in her hand, was dealing forth this daily allowance of comfort to the squire, while he smoked his afternoon pipe, when she received the above letter; which she had no sooner read, than she delivered it to him, saying, 'There, Sir, there is an account of your lost sheep. Fortune hath again restored her to you; and if you will be governed by my advice, it is possible you may yet preserve her.'

The squire had no sooner read the letter, than he leaped from his chair, threw his pipe into the fire, and gave a loud huzza for joy. He then summoned his servants, called for his boots, and ordered the Chevalier and several other horses to be saddled, and that Parson Supple should be immediately sent for. Having done this, he turned to his sister, caught her in his arms, and gave her a close embrace, saying, 'Zounds! you don't seem pleased; one would imagine you was sorry I have found the girl.'

'Brother,' answered she, 'the deepest politicians, who see to the bottom, discover often a very different aspect of affairs, from what swims on the surface. It is true, indeed, things do look rather less desperate than they did formerly in Holland, when Lewis the Fourteenth was at the gates of Amsterdam; but there is a delicacy required in this matter, which you will pardon me, brother, if I suspect you want. There is a

decorum to be used with a woman of figure, such as Lady Bellaston, brother, which requires a knowledge of the world, superior, I am afraid, to yours.'

'Sister,' cries the squire, 'I know you have no opinion of my parts; but I'll shew you on this occasion who is a fool. Knowledge, quoth'st! I have not been in the country so long, without having some knowledge of warrants, and the law of the land. I know I may take my own where, ever I can find it. Shew me my own daughter, and if I don't know how to come at her, I'll suffer you to call me a fool as long as I live. There be justices of peace in London, as well as in other places.'

'I protest,' cries she, 'you make me tremble for the event of this matter; which if you will proceed by my advice, you may bring to so good an issue. Do you really imagine, brother, that the house of a woman of figure is to be attacked by warrants, and brutal justices of the peace? I will inform you how to proceed. As soon as you arrive in town, and have got yourself into a decent dress (for indeed, brother, you have none at present fit to appear in) you must send your compliments to Lady Bellaston, and desire leave to wait on her. When you are admitted to her presence, as you certainly will be, and have told her your story, and have made proper use of my name, (for I think you only just know one another by sight, though you are relations) I am confident she will withdraw her protection from my niece, who hath certainly imposed upon her. This is the only method—Justices of peace, indeed! do you imagine any such event can arrive to a woman of figure in a civilized nation?'

'D—n their figures,' cries the squire; 'a pretty civilized nation, truly, where women are above the law. And what must I stand sending a parcel of compliments to a confounded whore, that keeps away a daughter from her own natural father? I tell you, sister, I am not so ignorant as you think me. I know you would have women above the law; but it is all a lye: I heard his lordship say at a size, that

'no one is above the law. But this of yours is Hanover law, I suppose.'

'Mr. Western,' said she, 'I think you daily improve in ignorance. I protest you are grown an arrant bear.'

'No more a bear than yourself, sister Western,' said the squire. 'Pox! you may talk of your civility as you will, I am sure you never shew any to me. I am no bear; no, nor no dog, neither; though I know somebody, that is something that begins with a b—; but, pox! I will shew you I have a got more good manners than some folks.'

'Mr. Western,' answered the lady, 'you may say what you please. *Je vous mesprise de tout mon cœur.* I shall not, therefore, be angry. Besides, as my cousin with that odious Irish name justly says, I have that regard for the honour and true interest of my family, and that concern for my niece, who is a part of it, that I have resolved to go to town myself upon this occasion; for, indeed, indeed, brother, you are not a fit minister to be employed at a polite court.—Greenland! Greenland! should always be the scene of the tramontane negotiation.'

'I thank Heaven,' cries the squire, 'I don't understand you now. You are got to your Hanoverian lingo. However, I'll shew you I scorn to be behind hand in civility with you; and as you are not angry for what I have said, so I am not angry for what you have said. Indeed, I have always thought it a folly for relations to quarrel; and, if they do now and then give a hasty word, why, people should give and take: for my part, I never bear malice; and I take it very kind of you to go up to London; for I never was there but twice in my life, and then I did not stay above a fortnight at a time; and, to be sure, I can't be expected to know much of the streets and the folks in that time. I never denied that you know'd all these matters better than I. For me to dispute that, would be all as one, as for you to dispute the management of a pack of dogs, or the finding a hare sitting, with me.'—'Which I promise you,' says she, 'I never will.'—'Well, and I promise you,' returned he, 'that I never will dispute either.'

Here then a league was struck (to borrow a phrase from the lady) between the contending parties; and now the parson arriving, and the horses being ready, the squire departed, having promised his sister to follow her advice, and she prepared to follow him the next day.

But having communicated these matters to the parson on the road, they both agreed that the prescribed formalities might very well be dispensed with; and the squire having changed his mind, proceeded in the manner we have already seen.

CHAP. VII.

IN WHICH VARIOUS MISFORTUNES BEFEL POOR JONES.

AFFAIRS were in the aforesaid situation, when Mrs. Honour arrived at Mrs. Miller's, and called Jones out from the company, as we have before seen; with whom, when she found herself alone, she began as follows.

'O my dear Sir, how shall I get spirits to tell you! you are undone, Sir! and my poor lady's undone, and I am undone!—'Hath any thing happened to Sophia?' cries Jones, staring like a mad-man. 'All that is bad,' cries Honour; 'O, I shall never get such another lady! O that I should ever live to see this day!' At these words, Jones turned pale as ashes, trembled and stammered; but Honour went on: 'O Mr. Jones, I have lost my lady for ever!—How! what! for Heaven's sake tell me.—'O my dear Sophia!—'You may well call her so,' said Honour; 'she was the dearest lady to me—I shall never have such another place.'—'D—n your place,' cries Jones; 'where is—what! what is become of my Sophia?'—'Ay, to be sure,' cries she, 'servants may be d—n'd. It signifies nothing what becomes of them, though they are turned away, and ruined ever so much. To be sure, they are not flesh and blood like other people. No, to be sure, it signifies nothing what becomes of them.'—'If you have any pity, any compassion,' cries Jones, 'I beg you will instantly tell me what hath happen—'
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ed to Sophia!—To be sure, I have more pity for you, than you have for me,” answered Honour; “I don’t d—n you, because you have lost the sweetest lady in the world. To be sure, you are worthy to be pitied, and I’m worthy to be pitied too: for, to be sure, if ever there was a good mistress—” “What hath happened?” cries Jones, in almost a raving fit. “What?—what?” said Honour; “why, the worst that could have happened, both for you and for me:—Her father is come to town, and hath carried her away from us both.” Here Jones fell on his knees, in thanksgiving that it was no worse. “No worse!” repeated Honour, “what could be worse for either of us? He carried her off, swearing she should marry Mr. Blifil; that’s for your comfort; and for poor me, I am turned out of doors.—” “Indeed, Mrs. Honour,” answered Jones, “you frightened me out of my wits. I imagined some most dreadful sudden accident had happened to Sophia; something, compared to which, even the seeing her married to Blifil, would be a trifle; but while there is life, there are hopes, my dear Honour. Women, in this land of liberty, cannot be married by actual brutal force.” “To be sure, Sir,” said she, “that’s true. There may be some hopes for you; but alack-a-day! what hopes are there for poor me? And to be sure, Sir, you must be sensible I suffer all this upon your account. All the quarrel the squire hath to me, is for taking your part, as I have done, against Mr. Blifil.” “Indeed, Mrs. Honour,” answered he, “I am sensible of my obligations to you, and will leave nothing in my power undone to make you amends.” “Alas, Sir,” said she, “what can make a servant amends for the loss of one place, but the getting another altogether as good!” “Do not despair, Mrs. Honour,” said Jones, “I hope to re-instate you again in the same.” “Alack-a-day, Sir,” said she, “how can I flatter myself with such hopes, when I know it is a thing impossible; for the squire is so set against me; and yet, if you should ever have my lady, as to be sure I now hope heartily you will; for you are a generous,

good-natured gentleman, and I am sure you loves her, and to be sure she loves you as dearly as her own soul—it is a matter in vain to deny it; because as why, every body that is in the least acquainted with my lady, must see it: for, poor dear lady, she can’t dissemble; and if two people who loves one another a’n’t happy, why, who should be so? Happiness don’t always depend upon what people has; besides, my lady has enough for both. To be sure, therefore, as one may say, it would be all the pity in the world to keep two such lovers asunder; nay, I am convinced, for my part, you will meet together at last; for if it is to be, there is no preventing it. If a marriage is made in heaven, all the justices of peace upon earth can’t break it off. To be sure, I wishes that Parson Supple had but a little more spirit to tell the squire of his wickedness in endeavouring to force his daughter contrary to her liking; but then his whole dependence is on the squire, and so the poor gentleman, though he is a very religious good sort of a man, and talks of the badness of such doings behind the squire’s back; yet, he dares not say his soul is his own, to his face. To be sure, I never saw him make so bold as just now; I was afraid the squire would have struck him. I would not have your honour be melancholly, Sir, nor despair; things may go better, as long as you are sure of my lady, and that I am certain you may be; for she never will be brought to consent to marry any other man. Indeed, I am terribly afraid the squire will do her a mischief in his passion; for he is a prodigious passionate gentleman, and I am afraid too, the poor lady will be brought to break her heart; for she is as tender-hearted as a chicken: it is pity, methinks, she had not a little of my courage. If I was in love with a young man, and my father offered to lock me up, I’d tear his eyes out, but I’d come at him; but then there’s a great fortune in the case, which it is in her father’s power either to give her or not; that, to be sure, may make some difference!”

Whether Jones gave strict attention to

to all the foregoing harangue, or whether it was for want of any vacancy in the discourse, I cannot determine; but he never once attempted to answer, nor did she once stop, till Partridge came running into the room, and informed him, that the great lady was upon the stairs.

Nothing could equal the dilemma to which Jones was now reduced. Honour knew nothing of any acquaintance that subsisted between him and Lady Bellafton; and she was almost the last person in the world to whom he would have communicated it. In this hurry and distress, he took (as is common enough) the worst course; and instead of exposing her to the lady, which would have been of little consequence, he chose to expose the lady to her: he therefore resolved to hide Honour, whom he had but just time to convey behind the bed, and to draw the curtains.

The hurry in which Jones had been all day engaged on account of his poor landlady and her family, the terrors occasioned by Mrs. Honour, and the confusion into which he was thrown by the sudden arrival of Lady Bellafton, had altogether driven former thoughts out of his head; so that it never once occurred to his memory to act the part of a sick man; which, indeed, neither the gaiety of his dress, nor the freshness of his countenance, would have at all supported.

He received her ladyship, therefore, rather agreeably to her desires, than to her expectations, with all the good humour he could muster in his countenance, and without any real or affected appearance of the least disorder.

Lady Bellafton no sooner entered the room, than she squatted herself down on the bed: 'So, my dear Jones,' said she, 'you find nothing can detain me long from you. Perhaps I ought to be angry with you, that I have neither seen nor heard from you all day; for I perceive your distemper would have suffered you to come abroad: nay, I suppose you have not sat in your chamber all day, dressed up like a fine lady, to see company after a lying-in: but, however, don't think I intend to scold you; for I never will give you an excuse for the cold behaviour of a husband, by putting on the ill humour of a wife.'

'Nay, Lady Bellafton,' said Jones, 'I am sure your ladyship will not upbraid me with neglect of duty, when I only waited for orders. Who, my dear creature, hath reason to complain? who missed an appointment last night, and left an unhappy man to expect, and wish, and sigh, and languish?'

'Do not mention it, my dear Mr. Jones,' cried she. 'If you knew the occasion, you would pity me. In short, it is impossible to conceive what women of condition are obliged to suffer from the impertinence of fools, in order to keep up the farce of the world. I am glad, however, all your languishing and wishing have done you no harm: for you never looked better in your life. Upon my faith, Jones, you might at this instant sit for the picture of Adonis.'

There are certain words of provocation, which men of honour hold can only properly be answered by a blow. Among lovers, possibly there may be some expressions which can be only answered by a kiss. The compliment which Lady Bellafton now made Jones, seems to be of this kind; especially as it was attended with a look, in which the lady conveyed more soft ideas than it was possible to express with her tongue.

Jones was certainly at this instant in one of the most disagreeable and distressed situations imaginable; for to carry on the comparison we made use of before, though the provocation was given by the lady, Jones could not receive satisfaction, nor so much as offer to ask it, in the presence of a third person; seconds in this kind of duels not being according to the law of arms. As this objection did not occur to Lady Bellafton, who was ignorant of any other woman being there but herself, she waited some time in great astonishment for an answer from Jones; who, conscious of the ridiculous figure he made, stood at a distance, and not daring to give the proper answer, gave none at all. Nothing can be imagined more comick, nor yet more tragical, than this scene would have been, if it had lasted much longer. The lady had already changed colour two or three times, and got up from the bed, and sat down again; while Jones was wishing the ground to sink under him, or

the house to fall on his head; when an odd accident freed him from an embarrassment, out of which neither the eloquence of a Cicero, nor the politicks of a Machiavel could have delivered him, without utter disgrace.

This was no other than the arrival of young Nightingale, dead drunk; or rather in that state of drunkenness, which deprives men of the use of their reason, without depriving them of the use of their limbs.

Mrs. Miller and her daughters were in bed, and Partridge was smoking his pipe by the kitchen fire; so that he arrived at Mr. Jones's chamber door without any interruption. This he burst open, and was entering without any ceremony, when Jones started from his seat, and ran to oppose him; which he did so effectually, that Nightingale never came far enough within the door, to see who was sitting on the bed.

Nightingale had, in reality, mistaken Jones's apartment for that in which himself had lodged; he therefore strongly insisted on coming in, often swearing that he would not be kept from his own bed. Jones, however, prevailed over him, and delivered him into the hands of Partridge, whom the noise on the stairs soon summoned to his master's assistance.

And now Jones was unwillingly obliged to return to his own apartment; where, at the very instant of his entrance, he heard Lady Bellafton venting an exclamation, though not a very loud one; and at the same time, saw her flinging herself into a chair in a vast agitation, which, in a lady of a tender constitution would have been an hysterick fit.

In reality, the lady, frightened with the struggle between the two men, of which she did know not what would be the issue, as she heard Nightingale swear many oaths he would come to his own bed, attempted to retire to her known place of hiding, which, to her great confusion, she found already occupied by another.

'Is this usage to be borne, Mr. Jones!' cries the lady. 'Basest of men! What wretch is this to whom you have exposed me?'—'Wretch!' cries Honour, bursting in a violent rage from her place of concealment—'Marry come up! wretch, forsooth! as poor a wretch as I am, I am honest; that

is more than some folks who are rich'er can say.'

Jones, instead of applying himself directly to take off the edge of Mrs. Honour's resentment, as a more experienced gallant would have done, fell to cursing his stars, and lamenting himself as the most unfortunate man in the world; and presently after, addressing himself to Lady Bellafton, he fell to some very absurd protestations of innocence. By this time, the lady having recovered the use of her reason, which she had as ready as any woman in the world, especially on such occasions, calmly replied; 'Sir, you need make no apologies; I see now who the person is: I did not at first know Mrs. Honour; but now I do, I can suspect nothing wrong between her and you; and I am sure she is a woman of too good sense to put any wrong constructions upon my visit to you; I have been always her friend, and it may be in my power to be much more so hereafter.'

Mrs. Honour was altogether as plausible, as she was passionate. Hearing therefore Lady Bellafton assume the soft tone, she likewise softened her's. 'I am sure, Madam,' says she, 'I have been always ready to acknowledge your ladyship's friendships to me; sure I never had so good a friend as your ladyship; and, to be sure, now I see it is your ladyship that I spoke to, I could almost bite my tongue off for very mad. I constructions upon your ladyship! to be sure, it doth not become a servant, as I am, to think about such a great, great lady—I mean, I was a servant: for, indeed, I am nobody's servant now, the more miserable wretch is me! I have lost the best mistress——' Here Honour thought fit to produce a shower of tears. 'Don't cry, child,' says the good lady: 'ways perhaps may be found to make you amends. Come to me to-morrow morning.' She then took up her fan, which lay on the ground, and without even looking at Jones, walked very majestically out of the room; there being a kind of dignity in the impudence of women of quality, which their inferiors vainly aspire to attain to in circumstances of this nature.

Jones followed her down stairs, often offering her his hand; which she absolutely



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absolutely refused him, and got into her chair without taking any notice of him as he stood bowing before her.

At his return up stairs, a long dialogue passed between him and Mrs. Honour, while she was adjusting herself after the discomposure she had undergone. The subject of this was his infidelity to her young lady; on which she enlarged with great bitterness: but Jones at last found means to reconcile her; and not only so, but to obtain a promise of most inviolable secrecy, and that she would the next morning endeavour to find out Sophia, and bring him a farther account of the proceedings of the squire.

Thus ended this unfortunate adventure, to the satisfaction only of Mrs. Honour; for a secret (as some of my readers will, perhaps, acknowledge from experience) is often a very valuable possession; and that not only to those who faithfully keep it, but sometimes to such as whisper it about, till it come to the ears of every one, except the ignorant person; who pays for the supposed concealing of what is publickly known.

CHAP. VIII.

SHORT AND SWEET.

Notwithstanding all the obligations she had received from Jones, Mrs. Miller could not forbear in the morning some gentle remonstrances for the hurricane which had happened the preceding night in his chamber. These were however so gentle and so friendly; professing, and indeed truly, to aim at nothing more than the real good of Mr. Jones himself, that he, far from being offended, thankfully received the admonition of the good woman, expressed much concern for what had passed, excused it as well as he could, and promised never more to bring the same disturbances into the house.

But though Mrs. Miller did not refrain from a short expostulation in private at their first meeting, yet the occasion of his being summoned down stairs that morning, was of a much more agreeable kind; being, indeed, to perform the office of a father, to Miss Nancy, and to give her in wedlock to Mr. Nightingale, who was

now ready dressed, and full as sober as many of my readers will think a man ought to be, who receives a wife in so imprudent a manner.

And here, perhaps, it may be proper to account for the escape which this young gentleman had made from his uncle, and for his appearance in the condition in which we have seen him the night before.

Now, when the uncle had arrived at his lodgings with his nephew, partly to indulge his own inclinations (for he dearly loved his bottle) and partly to disqualify his nephew from the immediate execution of his purpose, he ordered wine to be set on the table; with which he so briskly ply'd the young gentleman, that this latter, who, though not much used to drinking, did not detect it so as to be guilty of disobedience, or of want of complaisance by refusing, was soon compleatly finished.

Just as the uncle had obtained this victory, and was preparing a bed for his nephew, a messenger arrived with a piece of news which so entirely disconcerted and shocked him, that he in a moment lost all consideration for his nephew, and his whole mind became entirely taken up with his own concerns.

This sudden and afflicting news was no less, than that his daughter had taken the opportunity of almost the first moment of his absence, and had gone off with a neighbouring young clergyman; against whom, though her father could have had but one objection, namely, that he was worth nothing, yet she had never thought proper to communicate her amour even to that father; and so artfully had she managed, that it had never been once suspected by any, till now that it was consummated.

Old Mr. Nightingale no sooner received this account, than in the utmost confusion he ordered a post-chaise to be instantly got ready; and having recommended his nephew to the care of a servant, he directly left the house, scarce knowing what he did, nor whither he went.

The uncle being thus departed, when the servant came to attend the nephew to bed, had waked him for that purpose, and had at last made him sensible that his uncle was gone; he, in-

stead of accepting the kind offices tendered him, insisted on a chair being called; with this, the servant, who had received no strict orders to the contrary, readily complied; and thus being conducted back to the house of Mrs. Miller, he had staggered up to Mr. Jones's chamber, as hath been before recounted.

This bar of the uncle being now removed (though young Nightingale knew not as yet in what manner) and all parties being quickly ready, the mother, Mr. Jones, Mr. Nightingale, and his love, stepped into a hackney-coach which conveyed him to Doctors Commons; where Miss Nancy was, in vulgar language, soon made an honest woman; and the poor mother became, in the purest sense of the word, one of the happiest of all human beings.

And now Mr. Jones, having seen his good offices to that poor woman and her family brought to a happy conclusion, began to apply himself to his own concerns; but, here left many of my readers should censure his folly for thus troubling himself with the affairs of others, and lest some few should think he acted more disinterestedly than indeed he did, we think proper to assure our reader, that he was so far from being unconcerned in this matter, that he had indeed a very considerable interest in bringing it to that final consummation.

To explain this seeming paradox at once, he was one who could truly say with him in Terence, *Homo sum: nihil humani a me alienum puto*. He was never an indifferent spectator of the misery or happiness of any one; and he felt either the one or the other in greater proportion as he himself contributed to either. He could not, therefore, be the instrument of raising a whole family from the lowest state of wretchedness to the highest pitch of joy, without conveying great felicity to himself; more, perhaps, than worldly men often purchase to themselves by undergoing the most severe labour, and often by wading through the deepest iniquity.

Those readers who are of the same complexion with him, will, perhaps, think this short chapter contains abundance of matter; while others may, probably, wish, short as it is, that it had been totally spared, as impertinent

to the main design; which, I suppose, they conclude, is to bring Mr. Jones to the gallows; or, if possible, to a more deplorable catastrophe.

CHAP. IX.

CONTAINING LOVE LETTERS OF SEVERAL SORTS.

MR. Jones, at his return home, found the following letters lying on his table, which he luckily opened in the order they were sent,

LETTER I.

SURELY I am under some strange infatuation; I cannot keep my resolutions a moment, however strongly made or justly founded. Last night I resolved never to see you more; this morning I am willing to hear if you can, as you say, clear up this affair: and yet I know that to be impossible. I have said every thing to myself which you can invent. Perhaps not. Perhaps your invention is stronger. Come to me therefore the moment you receive this. If you can forge an excuse, I almost promise you to believe it. Betrayed to—I will think no more. Come to me directly. This is the third letter I have writ; the two former are burnt—I am almost inclined to burn this too. I wish I may preserve my senses. Come to me presently.

LETTER II.

IF you ever expect to be forgiven, or even suffered within my doors, come to me this instant.

LETTER III.

NOW find you was not at home when my notes came to your lodgings. The moment you receive this, let me see you: I shall not stir out; nor shall any body be let in but yourself. Sure nothing can detain you long.

Jones had just read over these three billets,

billets, when Mr. Nightingale came into the room. 'Well, Tom,' said he, 'any news from Lady Bellafton, after last night's adventure?' (for it was now no secret to any one in that house who the lady was.) 'The Lady Bellafton,' answered Jones, very gravely. 'Nay, dear Tom,' cries Nightingale, 'don't be so reserved to your friends. Though I was too drunk to see her last night, I saw her at the masquerade. Do you think I am ignorant who the queen of the fairies is?'—'And did you really then know the lady at the masquerade?' said Jones. 'Yes, upon my soul, did I,' said Nightingale; 'and have given you twenty hints of it since; though you seemed always so tender on that point, that I would not speak plainly. I fancy, my friend, by your extreme nicety in this matter, you are not so well acquainted with the character of the lady, as with her person. Don't be angry, Tom; but, upon my honour, you are not the first young fellow she hath debauched. Her reputation is in no danger, believe me.'

Though Jones had no reason to imagine the lady to have been of the vestal kind, when his amour began; yet, as he was thoroughly ignorant of the town, and had very little acquaintance in it, he had yet no knowledge of that character which is vulgarly called a demi-rep; that is to say, a woman who intrigues with every man she likes, under the name and appearance of virtue; and who, though some over-nice ladies will not be seen with her, is visited (as they term it) by the whole town; in short, whom every one knows to be what nobody calls her.

When he found, therefore, that Nightingale was perfectly acquainted with his intrigue, and began to suspect, that so scrupulous a delicacy as he had hitherto observed, was not quite necessary on the occasion, he gave a latitude to his friend's tongue, and desired him to speak plainly what he knew, or had ever heard of the lady.

Nightingale, who, in many other instances, was rather too effeminate in his disposition, had a pretty strong inclination to tittle-fattle. He had no sooner, therefore, received a full liberty of speaking from Jones, than he entered upon a long narrative concern-

ing the lady; which, as it contained many particulars highly to her dishonour, we have too great a tenderness for all women of condition, to repeat. We would cautiously avoid giving an opportunity to the future commentators on our works, of making any malicious application; and of forcing us to be, against our will, the author of scandal, which never entered into our head.

Jones having very attentively heard all that Nightingale had to say, fetched a deep sigh; which the other observing, cried, 'Heyday! why, thou art not in love, I hope! Had I imagined my stories would have affected you, I promise you should never have heard them.'—'O my dear friend,' cries Jones, 'I am so entangled with this woman, that I know not how to extricate myself!—In love, indeed!—No, my friend, but I am under obligations to her, and very great ones. Since you know so much, I will be very explicit with you. It is owing, perhaps, solely to her, that I have not, before this, wanted a bit of bread. How can I possibly desert such a woman? and yet I must desert her, or be guilty of the blackest treachery to one, who deserves infinitely better of me than she can!—a woman, my Nightingale, for whom I have a passion which few can have an idea of! I am half distracted with doubts how to act!—And is this other, pray, an honourable mistress?' cries Nightingale. 'Honourable!' answered Jones; 'no breath ever yet durst suller her reputation. The sweetest air is not purer; the limpid stream not clearer than her honour: she is all over, both in mind and body, consummate perfection! She is the most beautiful creature in the universe; and yet she is mistress of such noble, elevated qualities, that though she is never from my thoughts, I scarce ever think of her beauty, but when I see it.'—'And can you, my good friend,' cries Nightingale, 'with such an engagement as this upon your hands, hesitate a moment about quitting such a woman?'—'Hold, said Jones, 'no more abuse of her. I detest the thoughts of ingratitude.'—'Pooh!' answered the other, 'you are not the first upon whom the hath conferred obligations

obligations of this kind. She is remarkably liberal where she likes; though, let me tell you, her favours are so prudently bestowed, that they should rather raise a man's vanity, than his gratitude.' In short, Nightingale proceeded so far on this head, and told his friend so many stories of the lady, which he swore to the truth of, that he entirely removed all esteem for her from the breast of Jones; and his gratitude was lessened in proportion. Indeed, he began to look on all the favours he had received, rather as wages than benefits; which not only depreciated her, but himself too, in his own conceit, and put him quite out of humour with both. From this disgust, his mind, by a natural transition, turned towards Sophia: her virtue, her purity, her love to him, her sufferings on his account, filled all his thoughts, and made his commerce with Lady Bellaston appear still more odious. The result of all was, that though his turning himself out of her service, in which light he now saw his affair with her, would be the loss of his bread; yet he determined to quit her, if he could but find a handsome pretence; which, having communicated to his friend, Nightingale considered a little, and then said, 'I have it, my boy! I have found out a sure method: propose marriage to her, and I would venture hanging upon the success!'—'Marriage!' cries Jones. 'Ay, propose marriage!' answered Nightingale, 'and she will declare off in a moment. I knew a young fellow whom she kept formerly, who made the offer to her in earnest, and was presently turned off for his pains.'

Jones declared he could not venture the experiment. 'Perhaps,' said he, 'she may be less shocked at this proposal from one man than from another: and if she should take me at my word, where am I then? Caught in my own trap, and undone for ever!'—'No,' answered Nightingale, 'not if I can give you an expedient, by which you may, at any time, get out of the trap.'—'What expedient can that be?' replied Jones. 'This,' answered Nightingale. 'The young fellow I mentioned, who is one of the most intimate acquaintances I have in the world, is so angry with her for some ill offices she hath since

done him, that I am sure he would, without any difficulty, give you a sight of her letters; upon which you may decently break with her; and declare off before the knot is tied, if she should really be willing to tie it, which I am convinced she will not.'

After some hesitation, Jones, upon the strength of this assurance, consented; but as he swore he wanted the confidence to propose the matter to her face, he wrote the following letter, which Nightingale dictated.

MADAM,

I Am extremely concerned, that, by an unfortunate engagement abroad, I should have missed receiving the honour of your ladyship's commands the moment they came; and the delay which I must now suffer of vindicating myself to your ladyship, greatly adds to this misfortune. O Lady Bellaston, what a terror have I been in, for fear your reputation should be exposed by these perverse accidents! There is one only way to secure it. I need not name what that is. Only permit me to say, that as your honour is as dear to me as my own, so my sole ambition is to have the glory of laying my liberty at your feet; and believe me, when I assure you, I can never be made completely happy, without you generously bestow on me a legal right of calling you mine for ever. I am, Madam, with most profound respect, your ladyship's most obliged, obedient humble servant,

THOMAS JONES.

To this she presently returned the following answer.

SIR,

WHEN I read over your serious epistle, I could, from its coldness and formality, have sworn that you had already the legal right you mention; nay, that we had, for many years, composed that monstrous animal, a husband and wife. Do you really, then, imagine me a fool? or do you fancy yourself capable of so entirely persuading me

out

out of my senses, that I should deliver my whole fortune into your power, in order to enable you to support your pleasures at my expence. Are these the proofs of love which I expected? Is this the return for—but I scorn to upbraid you, and am in great admiration of your profound respect.

P. S. I am prevented from revising:—perhaps I have said more than I meant.—Come to me at eight this evening.

Jones, by the advice of his privy-council, replied.

MADAM,

IT is impossible to express how much I am shocked at the suspicion you entertain of me. Can Lady Bellaston have conferred favours on a man whom she could believe capable of so base a design? or can she treat the most solemn tie of love with contempt? Can you imagine, Madam, that if the violence of my passion, in an unguarded moment, overcame the tenderness which I have for your honour, that I would think of indulging myself in the continuance of an intercourse which could not possibly escape long the notice of the world; and which, when discovered, must prove so fatal to your reputation? If such be your opinion of me, I must pray for a sudden opportunity of returning those pecuniary obligations, which I have been so unfortunate to receive at your hands; and for those of a more tender kind, I shall ever remain, &c. And so concluded in the very words with which he had concluded the former letter.

The lady answered as follows.

I See you are a villain; and I despise you from my soul. If you come here, I shall not be at home.

Though Jones was well satisfied with his deliverance from a thralldom which those who have ever experienced it, will, I apprehend, allow to be none of the lightest, he was not, however, perfectly easy in his mind. There was, in this scheme, too much of fal-

lacy, to satisfy one who utterly detested every species of falshood or dishonesty: nor would he, indeed, have submitted to put it in practice, had he not been involved in a distressful situation, where he was obliged to be guilty of some dishonour, either to the one lady or the other; and surely the reader will allow, that every good principle, as well as love, pleaded strongly in favour of Sophia.

Nightingale highly exulted in the success of his stratagem; upon which he received many thanks, and much applause from his friend. He answered, 'Dear Tom, we have conferred very different obligations on each other. To me you owe the regaining your liberty; to you I owe the loss of mine. But, if you are as happy in the one instance, as I am in the other, I promise you, we are the two happiest fellows in England.'

The two gentlemen were now summoned down to dinner, where Mrs. Miller, who performed herself the office of cook, had exerted her best talents, to celebrate the wedding of her daughter. This joyful circumstance, she ascribed principally to the friendly behaviour of Jones: her whole soul was fired with gratitude towards him, and all her looks, words, and actions, were so busied in expressing it, that her daughter, and even her new son-in-law, were very little the objects of her consideration.

Dinner was just ended, when Mrs. Miller received a letter; but as we have had letters enough in this chapter, we shall communicate the contents in our next.

CHAP. X.

CONSISTING PARTLY OF FACTS,
AND PARTLY OF OBSERVATIONS
UPON THEM.

THE letter then which arrived at the end of the preceding chapter, was from Mr. Allworthy; and the purport of it was, his intention to come immediately to town, with his nephew Blifil, and a desire to be accommodated with his usual lodgings; which were the first floor for himself, and the second for his nephew.

The cheerfulness which had before displayed

displayed itself in the countenance of the poor woman, was a little clouded on this occasion. This news did, indeed, a good deal disconcert her. To requite so disinterested a match with her daughter, by presently turning her new son-in-law out of doors, appeared to her, very unjustifiable on the one hand; and, on the other, she could scarce bear the thoughts of making any excuse to Mr. Allworthy, after all the obligations received from him, for depriving him of lodgings which were, indeed, strictly his due: for that gentleman, in conferring all his numberless benefits on others, acted by a rule diametrically opposite to what is practised by most generous people. He contrived, on all occasions, to hide his beneficence, not only from the world, but even from the object of it. He constantly used the words, *lend and pay*, instead of *give*; and by every other method he could invent, always lessened with his tongue, the favours he conferred, while he was reaping them with both his hands. When he settled the annuity of fifty pounds a year, therefore, on Mrs. Miller, he told her, it was in consideration of always having her first floor when he was in town, (which she scarce ever intended to be) but that she might let it at any other time, for that he would always send her a month's warning. He was now, however, hurried to town so suddenly, that he had no opportunity of giving such notice; and this hurry probably prevented him, when he wrote for his lodgings; adding, if they were then empty: for he would most certainly have been well satisfied to have relinquished them on a less sufficient excuse, than what Mrs. Miller could now have made.

But there is a sort of persons, who, as Prior excellently well remarks, direct their conduct by something

Beyond the fix'd and settled rules
Of vice and virtue in the schools;
Beyond the letter of the law.

To these, it is so far from being sufficient, that their defence would acquit them at the Old Bailey; that they are not even contented, though conscience, the severest of all judges, should discharge them. Nothing short of the fair and honourable, will satisfy

the delicacy of their minds; and if any of their actions fall short of this mark, they mope and pine, are as uneasy and restless as a murderer, who is afraid of a ghost, or of the hangman.

Mrs. Miller was one of these. She could not conceal her uneasiness at this letter; with the contents of which she had no sooner acquainted the company, and given some hints of her distress, than Jones, her good angel, presently relieved her anxiety. 'As for myself, Madam,' said he, 'my lodging is at your service at a moment's warning; and Mr. Nightingale, I am sure, as he cannot yet prepare a house fit to receive his lady, will consent to return to his new lodging, whither Mrs. Nightingale will certainly consent to go.' With which proposal, both husband and wife instantly agreed.

The reader will easily believe, that the checks of Mrs. Miller began again to glow with additional gratitude to Jones; but, perhaps, it may be more difficult to persuade him, that Mr. Jones having, in his last speech, called her daughter Mrs. Nightingale, (it being the first time that agreeable sound had ever reached her ears) gave the fond mother more satisfaction, and warmed her heart more towards Jones, than his having dissipated her present anxiety.

The next day was then appointed for the removal of the new-married couple, and of Mr. Jones, who was likewise to be provided for in the same house with his friend. And now the serenity of the company was again restored, and they passed the day in the utmost cheerfulness, all except Jones; who, though he outwardly accompanied the rest in their mirth, felt many bitter pangs on the account of his Sophia; which were not a little heightened by the news of Mr. Bliss's coming to town, (for he clearly saw the intention of his journey) and what greatly aggravated his concern was, that Mrs. Honour, who had promised to enquire after Sophia, and to make her report to him early the next evening, had disappointed him.

In the situation that he and his mistress were in at this time, there were scarce any grounds for him to hope, that he should hear any good news; yet, he was

was as impatient to see Mrs. Honour, as if he had expected she would bring him a letter with an assignation in it from Sophia, and bore the disappointment as ill. Whether this impatience arose from that natural weakness of the human mind, which makes it desirous to know the worst, and renders uncertainty the most intolerable of pains; or whether he still flattered himself with some secret hopes, we will not determine. But that it might be the last, whoever has loved, cannot but know: for, of all the powers exercised by this passion, over our minds, one of the most wonderful is, that of supporting hope in the midst of despair. Difficulties, improbabilities, nay, impossibilities, are quite overlooked by it; so that, to any man extremely in love, may be applied what Addison says of Cæsar,

The Alps, and Pyreneans, sink before him!

Yet, it is equally true, that the same passion will, sometimes, make mountains of mole-hills, and produce despair in the midst of hope; but these cold fits last not long in good constitutions: which temper Jones was now in, we leave the reader to guess, having no exact information about it; but this is certain, that he had spent two hours in expectation; when, being unable any longer to conceal his uneasiness, he retired to his room; where his anxiety had almost made him frantick, when the following letter was brought him from Mrs. Honour, with which we shall present the reader *verbatim et literatim*.

SIR,

I Shud sartenly haf kaled on you a cordin too mi prommiss had dunt itt bin that hur lashipp prevent mee; for too bee sur, Sir, you nose very well that evere persun must luk furst at ome, and sartenly such another offer mite not ave ever hapned, so as I shud ave bin justly to blam, had I not excepted of it when her lashipp was so veri kind as to offer to make mee hur one uman without mi ever askin any such thing, to bee sur thee is won of thee best ladis in thee wurld, and pepil, who safe to the kontrari must bee veri wiket pepil in thare harts. To be sur if ever I ave sad any thing of that kine it as

bin thru ignorens and I am hartili sorri for it. I nose your onur to be a genteelman of more onur and onestly, if I ever said ani such thing, to repete it to hurt a pore servant that as alwais ad thee gratest respect in thee wurld for ure onur. To bee sur won shud kepe wons tung within wons teeth, for no boddi nose what may happen; and too bee sur if ani boddi ad told mee yesterday, that I shud haf bin in so gud a plase to day, I shud not haf beleaved it; for too be sur I never was a dremd of any such thing, nor shud I ever have soft after ani other bodi's plase; but as her lashipp wafs so kine of her one a corde too give it mee without askin, to bee sur Mrs. Etoff herself, nor no other boddi can blam mee for exceptin such a thing when it falls in mi waye. I beg ure onur not too men-shion ani thing of what I haf sad, for I wish ure onur all the gud luk in thee wurld; and I don't cuestion butt thatt u wil haf Madame Sofia in the end; but as to miself ure onur nose I kant bee of ani farder farvis to u in that matar, nou bein under thee cumand of anuthar parson, and not me one mistres. I begg ure onur to say nothing of what past, and believe mi to be, Sir, ure onur's umble servant to cumand till deth,

'HONOUR BLACKMORE.'

Various were the conjectures which Jones entertained for this step of Lady Bellaston; who, in reality, had little farther design, than to secure within her own house, the repository of a secret, which she chose should make no farther progress than it had made already; but mostly, she desired to keep it from the ears of Sophia; for, though that young lady was almost the only one who would never have repeated it again, her ladyship could not persuade herself of this; since, as she now hated poor Sophia with most implacable hatred, she conceived a reciprocal hatred to herself to be lodged in the tender breast of our heroine, where no such passion had ever yet found an entrance.

While Jones was terrifying himself with the apprehension of a thousand dreadful machinations, and deep political designs, which he imagined to be at the bottom of the promotion of Honour, Fortune, who hitherto seems to

have been an utter enemy to his match with Sophia; tried a new method to put a final end to it, by throwing a temptation in the way of Jones, which, in his present desperate situation, it seemed unlikely he should be able to resist.

CHAP. XI.

CONTAINING CURIOUS, BUT NOT UNPRECEDENTED MATTER.

THERE was a lady, one Mrs. Hunt, who had often seen Jones at the house where he lodged, being intimately acquainted with the women there, and, indeed, a very great friend to Mrs. Miller. Her age was about thirty—for she owned six and twenty; her face and person very good, only inclining a little too much to be fat. She had been married young by her relations, to an old Turkey merchant; who, having got a great fortune, had left off trade. With him she lived without reproach, but not without pain, in a state of great self-denial, for about twelve years; and her virtue was rewarded, by his dying, and leaving her very rich. The first year of her widowhood was just at an end, and she had passed it in a good deal of retirement, seeing only a few particular friends, and dividing her time between her devotions and novels, of which she was always extremely fond. Very good health, a very warm constitution, and a great deal of religion, made it absolutely necessary for her to marry again; and she resolved to please herself in her second husband, as she had done her friends in the first. From her the following billet was brought to Jones.

SIR,

FROM the first day I saw you, I doubt my eyes have told you too plainly, that you were not indifferent to me; but neither my tongue nor my hand should have ever avowed it, had not the ladies of the family where you are lodged, given me such a character of you, and told me such proofs of your virtue and goodness, as convince me you are not only the most agreeable, but the most worthy of men. I have also

the satisfaction to hear from them, that neither my person, understanding, or character, are disagreeable to you. I have a fortune sufficient to make us both happy, but which cannot make me so without you. In thus disposing of myself, I know I shall incur the censure of the world; but if I did not love you more than I fear the world, I should not be worthy of you. One only difficulty stops me: I am informed you are engaged in a commerce of gallantry with a woman of fashion. If you think it worth while to sacrifice that to the possession of me, I am yours; if not, forget my weakness, and let this remain an eternal secret between you and

ARABELLA HUNT.

At the reading of this, Jones was put into a violent flutter. His fortune was then at a very low ebb, the source being stopped from which hitherto he had been supplied. Of all he had received from Lady Bellaston, not above five guineas remained; and that very morning he had been dunned by a tradesman for twice that sum: his honourable mistress was in the hands of her father, and he had scarce any hopes ever to get her out of them again. To be subsisted at her expence, from that little fortune she had independent of her father, went much against the delicacy both of his pride and his love. This lady's fortune would have been exceeding convenient to him, and he could have no objection to her in any respect. On the contrary, he liked her as well as he did any woman, except Sophia: but to abandon Sophia, and marry another, that was impossible; he could not think of it upon any account: yet why should he not, since it was plain she could not be his? Would it not be kinder to her, than to continue her longer engaged in a hopeless passion for him? ought he not to do so in friendship to her? This notion prevailed some moments, and he had almost determined to be false to her from a high point of honour; but that refinement was not able to stand very long against the voice of Nature, which cried in his heart, that such friendship was treason to love. At last he called for pen, ink, and paper, and writ as follows to Mrs. Hunt.

MADAM,

MADAM,

IT would be but a poor return to the favour you have done me, to sacrifice any gallantry to the possession of you; and I would certainly do it, though I were not disengaged, as at present I am, from any affair of that kind. But I should not be the honest man you think me, if I did not tell you, that my affections are engaged to another, who is a woman of virtue, and one that I never can leave, though it is probable I shall never possess her. God forbid, that in return of your kindness to me, I should do you such an injury, as to give you my hand, when I cannot give my heart! No; I had much rather starve, than be guilty of that. Even tho' my mistress were married to another, I would not marry you, unless my heart had entirely effaced all impressions of her. Be assured that your secret was not more safe in your own breast, than in that of, your most obliged, and grateful humble servant,

T. JONES.

When our hero had finished and sent this letter, he went to his scrutore, took out Miss Western's muff, kissed it several times, and then strutted some turns about the room, with more satisfaction of mind than ever any Irishman felt in carrying off a fortune of fifty thousand pounds.

CHAPTER XII.

A DISCOVERY MADE BY PARTRIDGE.

WHILE Jones was exulting in the consciousness of his integrity, Partridge came capering into the room; as was his custom when he brought, or fancied he brought, any good tidings. He had been dispatched that morning, by his master, with orders to endeavour, by the servants of Lady Bellaston, or by any other means, to discover whither Sophia had been conveyed; and he now returned, and with a joyful countenance told our hero, that he had found the lost bird. 'I have seen, Sir,' says he, 'Black George the game-keeper, who is one of the servants whom the squire hath

brought with him to town. I knew him presently, though I have not seen him these several years; but, you know, Sir, he is a very remarkable man, or to use a purer phrase, he hath a most remarkable beard, the largest and blackest I ever saw. It was some time, however, before Black George could recollect me.'—'Well, but what is your good news?' cries Jones: 'what do you know of my Sophia?'—'You shall know presently, Sir,' answered Partridge; 'I am coming to it as fast as I can. You are so impatient, Sir, you would come at the infinitive mood, before you can get to the imperative. As I was saying, Sir, it was some time before he recollected my face.'—'Confound your face!' cries Jones, 'what of my Sophia?'—'Nay, Sir,' answered Partridge, 'I know nothing more of Madam Sophia, than what I am going to tell you; and I should have told you all before this, if you had not interrupted me; but if you look so angry at me, you will frighten all of it out of my head, or to use a purer phrase, out of my memory. I never saw you look so angry since the day we left Upton, which I shall remember if I was to live a thousand years.'—'Well, pray go on in your own way,' said Jones; 'you are resolved to make me mad, I find.'—'Not for the world,' answered Partridge; 'I have suffered enough for that already; which, as I said, I shall bear in my remembrance the longest day I have to live.'—'Well, but Black George!' cries Jones. 'Well, Sir, as I was saying, it was a long time before he could recollect me; for indeed I am very much altered since I saw him. *Non sum qualis eram*. I have had troubles in the world; and nothing alters a man so much as grief: I have heard it will change the colour of a man's hair in a night. However, at last, know me he did, that's sure enough; for we are both of an age, and were at the same charity-school. George was a great dunce; but no matter for that: all men do not thrive in the world according to their learning. I am sure, I have reason to say so; but it will be all one a thousand years hence. Well, Sir—where was

‘ I?—O—well! we no sooner knew each other, than after many hearty shakes by the hand, we agreed to go to an alehouse and take a pot; and by good luck, the beer was some of the best I have met with since I have been in town.—Now, Sir, I am coming to the point; for, no sooner did I name you, and told him that you and I came to town together, and had lived together ever since, than he called for another pot, and swore he would drink to your health; and, indeed, he drank your health so heartily, that I was overjoyed to see there was so much gratitude left in the world: and, after we had emptied that pot, I said I would be my pot too, and so we drank another to your health; and then I made haste home to tell you the news.’

‘ What news?’ cries Jones; ‘ you have not mentioned a word of my Sophia!’—‘ Bless me! I had like to have forgot that. Indeed, we mentioned a great deal about young Madam Western; and George told me all: that Mr. Blifil is coming to town, in order to be married to her. He had best make haste then,” says I, “ or somebody will have her before he comes; and indeed,” says I, “ Mr. Seagrim, it is a thousand pities somebody should not have her; for he certainly loves her above all the women in the world. I would have both you and she know, that it is not for her fortune he follows her; for I can assure you, as to matter of that, there is another lady, one of much greater quality and fortune than she can pretend to, who is so fond of somebody, that she comes after him day and night.”

Here Jones fell into a passion with Partridge, for having, as he said, betrayed him; but the poor fellow answered, he had mentioned no name: ‘ Besides, Sir,’ said he, ‘ I can assure you, George is sincerely your friend, and wished Mr. Blifil at the devil more than once; nay, he said he would do any thing in his power upon earth to serve you; and so I am convinced he will. Betray you, indeed! why, I question whether you have a better friend than George up-

‘ on earth, except myself, or one that would go farther to serve you.’

‘ Well,’ says Jones, a little pacified, ‘ you say this fellow, who I believe indeed is enough inclined to be my friend, lives in the same house with Sophia?’

‘ In the same house?’ answered Partridge; ‘ why, Sir, he is one of the servants of the family, and very well dressed I promise you he is: if it was not for his black beard, you would hardly know him.’

‘ One service, then, at least, he may do me,’ says Jones; ‘ sure he can certainly convey a letter to my Sophia?’

‘ You have hit the nail *ad unguem*,’ cries Partridge; ‘ how came I not to think of it? I will engage he shall do it, upon the very first mentioning.’

‘ Well then,’ said Jones, ‘ do you leave me at present, and I will write a letter, which you shall deliver to him to-morrow morning; for I suppose you know where to find him.’

‘ O yes, Sir,’ answered Partridge; ‘ I shall certainly find him again; there is no fear of that. The liquor is too good for him to stay away long. I make no doubt but he will be there every day he stays in town.’

‘ So you don’t know the street then where my Sophia is lodged?’ cries Jones.

‘ Indeed, Sir, I do,’ says Partridge. ‘ What is the name of the street?’ cries Jones.

‘ The name, Sir? why here, Sir, just by,’ answered Partridge; ‘ not above a street or two off. I don’t indeed know the very name; for as he never told me, if I had asked, you know it might have put some suspicion into his head. No, no, Sir; let me alone for that: I am too cunning for that, I promise you.’

‘ Thou art most wonderfully cunning, indeed!’ replied Jones; ‘ however, I will write to my charmer, since I believe you will be cunning enough to find him to-morrow at the alehouse.’

And now, having dismissed the sagacious Partridge, Mr. Jones sat himself down to write; in which employment we shall leave him for a time. And here we put an end to the fifteenth book.



THE
HISTORY
OF A
FOUNDLING.

BOOK XVI.

CONTAINING THE SPACE OF FIVE DAYS.

CHAP. I.

OF PROLOGUES.



Have heard of a dramatic writer, who used to say, he would rather write a play than a prologue; in like manner, I think I can, with less pains, write

one of the books of this history, than the prefatory chapter to each of them.

To say the truth, I believe many a hearty curse hath been devoted on the head of that author who first instituted the method of prefixing to his play that portion of matter which is called the prologue; and which, at first, was part of the piece itself, but of latter years hath had usually so little connection with the drama before which it stands, that the prologue to one play might as well serve for any other. Those, indeed, of more modern date, seem all to be written on the same three topicks, viz. an abuse of the taste of the town, a condemnation of all contemporary authors; and an eulogium on the performance just about to be

represented. The sentiments in all these are very little varied; nor is it possible they should; and, indeed, I have often wondered at the great invention of authors, who have been capable of finding such various phrases to express the same thing.

In like manner, I apprehend, some future historian (if any one shall do me the honour of imitating my manner) will, after much scratching his pate, bestow some good wishes on my memory, for having first established these several initial chapters; most of which, like modern prologues, may as properly be prefixed to any other book in this history as to that which they introduce; or, indeed, to any other history as to this.

But, however authors may suffer by either of these inventions, the reader will find sufficient emolument in the one, as the spectator hath long found in the other.

First, it is well known, that the prologue serves the critick for an opportunity to try his faculty of hissing, and to tune his cat-call to the best advantage; by which means, I have known those musical instruments so well

well prepared, that they have been able to play in full concert at the first rising of the curtain.

The same advantages may be drawn from these chapters, in which the critick will be always sure of meeting with something that may serve as a whetstone to his noble spirit; so that he may fall with a more hungry appetite for censure on the history itself. And here his sagacity must make it needless to observe, how artfully these chapters are calculated for that excellent purpose; for in these we have always taken care to intersperse somewhat of the sour or acid kind, in order to sharpen and stimulate the said spirit of criticism.

Again, the indolent reader, as well as spectator, finds great advantage from both these; for as they are not obliged either to see the one, or read the others, and both the play and the book are thus protracted; by the former they have a quarter of an hour longer allowed them to sit at dinner, and by the latter they have the advantage of beginning to read at the fourth or fifth page instead of the first; a matter by no means of trivial consequence to persons who read books with no other view than to say they have read them; a more general motive to reading than is commonly imagined, and from which not only law books, and good books, but the pages of Homer and Virgil, of Swift and Cervantes, have been often turned over.

Many other are the emoluments which arise from both these; but they are for the most part so obvious, that we shall not at present stay to enumerate them; especially since it occurs to us, that the principal merit of both the prologue and the preface is, that they be short.

CHAP. II.

A WHIMSICAL ADVENTURE WHICH
BEFEL THE SQUIRE, WITH THE
DISTRESSED SITUATION OF SOPHIA.

WE must now convey the reader to Mr. Western's lodgings, which were in Piccadilly, where he was placed by the recommendation of the landlord at the Hercules Pillars at

Hyde-Park Corner; for at that inn, which was the first he saw on his arrival in town, he placed his horses; and in those lodgings, which were the first he heard of, he deposited himself.

Here, when Sophia alighted from the hackney-coach, which brought her from the house of Lady Bellaston, she desired to retire to the apartment provided for her; to which her father very readily agreed, and whither he attended her himself. A short dialogue, neither very material nor pleasant to relate minutely, then passed between them, in which he pressed her vehemently to give her consent to the marriage with Blisfil, who, as he acquainted her, was to be in town in a few days; but instead of complying, she gave a more peremptory and resolute refusal than she had ever done before. This so incensed her father, that, after many bitter vows that he would force her to have him whether she would or no, he departed from her with many hard words and curses, locked the door, and put the key into his pocket.

While Sophia was left, with no other company than what attend the closest state-prisoner, namely, fire and candle, the squire sat down to regale himself over a bottle of wine, with his parson, and the landlord of the Hercules Pillars; who, as the squire said, would make an excellent third man, and could inform them of the news of the town, and how affairs went: 'for, to be sure,' says he, 'he knows a great deal; since the horses of many of the quality stand at his house.'

In this agreeable society, Mr. Western passed that evening and great part of the succeeding day; during which period, nothing happened of sufficient consequence to find a place in this history. All this time Sophia passed by herself; for her father swore she should never come out of her chamber alive, unless she first consented to marry Blisfil; nor did he ever suffer the door to be unlocked, unless to convey her food, on which occasions he always attended himself.

The second morning after his arrival, while he and the parson were at breakfast together on a toast and a tankard, he was informed that a gentleman was below to wait on him.

'A gentleman!' quoth the squire; 'who the devil can he be?—Do, doc-

tor,

'tor, go down and see who 'tis. Mr. Blifil can hardly be come to town yet! Go down, do; and know what his business is.'

The doctor returned, with an account that it was a very well dressed man; and by the ribband in his hat, he took him for an officer of the army; that he said he had some particular business, which he could deliver to none but Mr. Western himself.

'An officer!' cries the squire, 'what can any such fellow have to do with me? If he wants an order for baggage-waggons, I am no justice of peace here, nor can I grant a warrant. Let un come up then, if he must speak to me.'

A very genteel man now entered the room; who having made his compliments to the squire, and desired the favour of being alone with him, delivered himself as follows.

'Sir, I come to wait upon you, by the command of my Lord Fellamar; but with a very different message from what I suppose you expect, after what passed the other night.'

'My lord who?' cries the squire, 'I never heard the name o'un.'

'His lordship,' said the gentleman, 'is willing to impute every thing to the effect of liquor; and the most trifling acknowledgment of that kind will set every thing right: for, as he hath the most violent attachment to your daughter, you, Sir, are the last person upon earth, from whom he would resent an affront; and happy is it for you both, that he hath given such publick demonstrations of his courage, as to be able to put up an affair of this kind, without danger of any imputation on his honour. All he desires, therefore, is, that you will, before me, make some acknowledgment; the slightest in the world will be sufficient; and he intends this afternoon to pay his respects to you, in order to obtain your leave of visiting the young lady on the footing of a lover.'

'I don't understand much of what you say, Sir,' said the squire; 'but I suppose, by what you talk about my daughter, that this is the lord which my cousin, Lady Bellafton, mentioned to me, and said something about his courting my daughter. If so be, that how, that be the case—

'you may give my service to his lordship, and tell un, the girl is disposed of already.'

'Perhaps, Sir,' said the gentleman, 'you are not sufficiently apprized of the greatness of this offer. I believe, such a person, title, and fortune, would be no where refused!'

'Look'e, Sir,' answered the squire, 'to be very plain, my daughter is bespoken already: but if she was not, I would not marry her to a lord, upon any account! I hate all lords; they are a parcel of courtiers and Harogverians, and I will have nothing to do with them.'

'Well, Sir,' said the gentleman, 'if that is your resolution, the message I am to deliver to you, is, that my lord desires the favour of your company this morning in Hyde Park.'

'You may tell my lord,' answered the squire, 'that I am busy, and cannot come. I have enough to look after at home, and cannot stir abroad on any account.'

'I am sure, Sir,' quoth the other, 'you are too much a gentleman to send such a message; you will not, I am convinced, have it said of you, that after having affronted a noble peer, you refuse him satisfaction. His lordship would have been willing, from his great regard to the young lady, to have made up matters in another way; but unless he is to look on you as a father, his honour will not suffer his putting up such an indignity as you must be sensible you offered him.'

'I offered him!' cries the squire; 'it is a d—n'd lye, I never offered him any thing!'

Upon these words, the gentleman returned a very short verbal rebuke, and this he accompanied at the same time with some manual remonstrances, which no sooner reached the ears of Mr. Western, than the worthy squire began to caper very briskly about the room; bellying at the same time with all his might, as if desirous to summon a greater number of spectators to behold his agility.

The parson, who had left great part of the tankard unfinished, was not retired far; he immediately attended, therefore, on the squire's vociferation, crying, 'Bless me, Sir! what's the matter?'

'matter?'—'Matter!' quoth the squire; 'here's a highwayman, I believe, who wants to rob and murder me; for he hath fallen upon me with that stick there in his hand, when I wish I may be d—n'd if I gid un the least provocation.'

'How, Sir!' said the captain, 'did you not tell me I ly'd?'

'No, as I hope to be saved!' answered the squire. 'I believe I might say, 'twas a lye, that I had offered any affront to my lord; but I never said the words *you lye*; I understand myself better—and you might have understood yourself better than to fall upon a naked man. If I had a stick in my hand, you would not have dared to strike me; I'd have knocked thy lantern jaws about thy ears. Come down into yard this minute, and I'll take a bout with thee at single stick for a broken head, that I will: or I will go into a naked room, and box thee for a bellyful. At unt half a man; at unt, I'm sure!'

The captain, with some indignation, replied, 'I see, Sir, you are below my notice; and I shall inform his lordship you are below his.—I am sorry I have dirtied my fingers with you.' At which words he withdrew, the parson interposing to prevent the squire from stopping him, in which he easily prevailed, as the other, though he made some efforts for the purpose, did not seem very violently bent on success. However, when the captain was departed, the squire sent many curses, and some menaces, after him; but as these did not set out from his lips till the officer was at the bottom of the stairs, and grew louder and louder as he was more and more remote, they did not reach his ears, or at least did not retard his departure.

Poor Sophia, however, who in her prison heard all her father's outcries from first to last, began now first to thunder with her foot, and afterwards to scream as loudly as the old gentleman himself had done before, though in a much sweeter voice. These screams soon silenced the squire, and turned all his consideration towards his daughter, whom he loved so tenderly, that the least apprehension of any harm happening to her, threw him presently into agonies: for, except in that single instance in which the whole future hap-

piness of her life was concerned, he was sovereign mistress of his inclinations.

Having ended his rage against the captain, with swearing he would take the law of him, the squire now mounted up stairs to Sophia; whom, as soon as he had unlocked and opened the door, he found all pale and breathless. The moment, however, that she saw her father, she collected all her spirits, and catching him hold by the hand, she cry'd passionately, 'O my dear Sir! I am almost frightened to death; I hope to Heaven no harm hath happened to you!'—'No, no,' cries the squire, 'no great harm. The rascal hath not hurt me much; but rat me if I don't ha' the la o'un.'—'Pray, dear Sir,' says she, 'tell me what's the matter? who is it that hath insulted you?'—'I don't know the name o'un,' answered Western; 'some officer fellow, I suppose, that we are to pay for beating us; but I'll make him pay this bout, if the rascal hath got any thing, which I suppose he hath not. For thof he was drest out so vine, I question whether he hath got a voot of land in the world.'—'But, dear Sir,' cries she, 'what was the occasion of your quarrel?'—'What should it be, Sophy,' answered the squire; 'but about you, Sophy? All my misfortunes are about you; and you will be the death of your poor father at last. Here's a varlet of a lord, the Lord knows who, forsooth! who hath taan a liking to you, and because I would not gi un my consent, he sent me a kallenge. Come, do be a good girl, Sophy, and put an end to all your father's troubles! come, do consent to ha' un! he will be in town within this day or two; do but promise me to marry un as soon as he comes, and you will make me the happiest man in the world! and I will make you the happiest woman—you shall have the finest cloaths in London, and the finest jewels, and a coach and six at your command! I promised Allworthy already to give up half my estate.—Odrabbit it! I should hardly stick at giving up the whole.'—'Will my papa be so kind,' says she, 'as to hear me speak?'—'Why wout ask, Sophia?' cries he, 'when dost know that I had rather hear thy voice, than the musick of the best pack of dogs' in

in England. Hear thee, my dear little girl! I hope I shall hear thee as long as I live: for if I was ever to lose that pleasure, I would not see a brass yarden to live a moment longer. Indeed, Sophy, you do not know how I love you; indeed you don't: or you never could have run away and left your poor father, who hath no other joy, no other comfort upon earth, but his little Sophy! At these words the tears stood in his eyes; and Sophia, (with the tears streaming from her eyes) answered, 'Indeed, my dear papa, I know you have loved me tenderly, and Heaven is my witness how sincerely I have returned your affection; nor could any thing but an apprehension of being forced into the arms of this man, have driven me to run from a father whom I love so passionately; that I would, with pleasure sacrifice my life to his happiness; nay, I have endeavoured to reason myself into doing more, and had almost worked up a resolution, to endure the most miserable of all lives, to comply with your inclination. It was that resolution alone to which I could not force my mind; nor can I ever.' Here the squire began to look wild, and the foam appeared at his lips; which Sophia observing, begged to be heard out, and then proceeded: 'If my father's life, his health, or any real happiness of his was at stake, I stand your resolved daughter; may Heaven blast me, if there is a misery I would not suffer to preserve you! No; that most detested, most loathsome of all lots would I embrace, I would give my hand to Bliss for your sake.' 'I tell thee, it will preserve me,' answers the father; 'it will give me health, happiness, life, every thing! Upon my soul, I shall die if I do not refuse me! I shall break my heart; I shall, upon my soul!—Is it possible,' says she, 'you can have such a desire to make me miserable?' 'I tell you now!' answered he loudly; 'my whole desire is to make thee happy. Me! d—n me, if there is a thing upon earth I would not do to see thee happy.'—'And will not my dear papa allow me to have the least knowledge of what will make me so?' If it be true, that happiness consists in, opinion, what must be my condition, when I shall think my-

self the most miserable of all the wretches upon earth?—'Better think yourself so,' said he, 'than know it, by being married to a poor bastardly vagabond!—' If it will content you, Sir,' said Sophia, 'I will give you the most solemn promise never to marry him nor any other while my papa lives, without his consent. Let me dedicate my whole life to your service; let me be again your poor Sophy, and my whole business and pleasure be, as it hath been, to please and divert you.'—'Look'e, Sophy,' answered the squire, 'I am not to be choused in this manner. Your aunt Western would then have reason to think me the fool she doth. No, no, Sophy; I'd have you to know, I have got more wisdom, and know more of the world, than to take the word of a woman in a matter where a man is concerned.'—'How, Sir, have I deserved this want of confidence?' said she: 'have I ever broke a single promise to you? or have I ever been found guilty of a falsehood from my cradle?'—'Look'e, Sophy,' cries he, 'that's neither here nor there. I am determined upon this match, and have him you shall; d—n me if that unt! d—n me if that unt, though I do hang thyself the next morning!' At repeating which words he clinched his fist, knit his brows, bit his lips, and thundered so loud, that the poor afflicted, terrified Sophia sunk trembling into her chair; and had not a flood of tears come immediately to her relief, perhaps worse had followed. Western beheld the deplorable condition of his daughter with no more contrition or remorse, than the turnkey of Newgate feels at viewing the agonies of a tender wife, when taking her last farewell of her condemned husband; or rather, he looked down on her with the same emotions which arise in an honest fair tradesman, who sees his debtor dragged to prison for ten pounds, which, though a just debt, the wretch is wickedly unable to pay. Or, to hit the case still more nearly, he felt the same compunction with a bawd, when some poor innocent whom she hath ensnared into her hands, falls in-to fits at the first proposal of what is called, seeing company. Indeed, this resemblance would be exact, was it not

that the bawd hath an interest in what she doth; and the father, though perhaps, he may blindly think otherwise, can in reality have none in urging his daughter to almost an equal prostitution.

In this condition he left his poor Sophia; and departing with a very vulgar observation on the effect of tears, he locked the room, and returned to the parson, who said every thing he durst in behalf of the young lady; which, though perhaps it was not quite so much as his duty required, yet was it sufficient to throw the squire into a violent rage, and into many indecent reflections on the whole body of the clergy, which we have too great an honour for that sacred function to commit to paper.

CHAP. III.

WHAT HAPPENED TO SOPHIA DURING HER CONFINEMENT.

THE landlady of the house where the squire lodged, had begun very early to entertain a strange opinion of her guests. However, as she was informed that the squire was a man of a vast fortune, and as she had taken care to exact a very extraordinary price for her rooms, she did not think proper to give any offence; for though she was not without some concern for the confinement of poor Sophia, of whose great sweetness of temper and affability, the maid of the house had made so favourable a report, which was confirmed by all the squire's servants; yet she had much more concern for her own interest, than to provoke one, whom, as she said, she perceived to be a very *bastib* kind of a gentleman.

Though Sophia ate but little, yet she was regularly served with her meals; indeed, I believe if she had liked any one rarity, that the squire, however angry, would have spared neither pains nor cost to have procured it for her; since, however strange it may appear to some of my readers, he really doated on his daughter, and to give her any kind of pleasure was the highest satisfaction of his life.

The dinner hour being arrived, Black George carried her up a pullet, the squire himself (for he had sworn not

to part with the key) attending the door. As George deposited the dish, some compliments passed between him and Sophia (for he had not seen her since she left the country, and she treated every servant with more respect than some persons shew to those who are in a very slight degree their inferiors;) Sophia would have had him take the pullet back, saying, she could not eat; but George begged her to try, and particularly recommended to her the eggs, of which he said it was full.

All this time the squire was waiting at the door; but George was a great favourite with his master, as his employment was in concerns of the highest nature, namely, about the game, and was accustomed to take many liberties. He had officiously carried up the dinner, being, as he said, very desirous to see his young lady; he made therefore no scruple of keeping his master standing above ten minutes, while civilities were passing between him and Sophia, for which he received only a good-humoured rebuke at the door when he returned.

The eggs of pullets, partridges, pheasants, &c. were, as George well knew, the most favourite dainties of Sophia. It was, therefore, no wonder, that he, who was a very good-natured fellow, should take care to supply her with this kind of delicacy, at a time when all the servants in the house were afraid she would be starved; for she had scarce swallowed a single morsel in the last forty hours.

Though vexation hath not the same effect on all persons as it usually hath on a widow, whose appetite is often rendered sharper than it can be rendered by the air on Bansted Downs, or Salisbury Plain; yet the sublimest grief, notwithstanding what some people may say to the contrary, will eat at last: and Sophia herself, after some little consideration, began to dissect the fowl, which she found to be as full of eggs as George had reported.

But if she was pleased with these, it contained something which would have delighted the Royal Society much more; for if a fowl with three legs be so invaluable a curiosity, when perhaps time hath produced a thousand such, at what price shall we esteem a bird which so totally contradicts all the laws of animal economy, as to contain a letter in it's belly?

belly? Ovid tells us of a flower into which Hyacinthus was metamorphosed, that bears letters on it's leaves, which Virgil recommended as a miracle to the Royal Society of his day; but no age nor nation hath ever recorded a bird with a letter in it's maw.

But though a miracle of this kind might have engaged all the *academies des sciences* in Europe, and perhaps in a fruitless enquiry; yet the reader, by barely recollecting the last dialogue which passed between Messieurs Jones and Partridge, will be very easily satisfied from whence this letter came, and how it found it's passage into the fowl.

Sophia, notwithstanding her long fast, and notwithstanding her favourite dish was there before her, no sooner saw the letter, than she immediately snatched it up, tore it open, and read as follows.

MADAM,

WAS I not sensible to whom I have the honour of writing, I should endeavour, however difficult, to paint the horrors of my mind, at the account brought me by Mrs. Honour; but as tenderness alone can have any true idea of the pangs which tenderness is capable of feeling; so can this most amiable quality, which my Sophia possesses in the most eminent degree, sufficiently inform her what her Jones must have suffered on this melancholy occasion. Is there a circumstance in the world which can heighten my agonies, when I hear of any misfortune which hath befallen you? Surely there is one only, and with that I am accursed. It is, my Sophia, the dreadful consideration, that I am myself the wretched cause. Perhaps, I here do myself too much honour; but none will envy me an honour which costs me so extremely dear. Pardon me this presumption, and pardon me a greater still, if I ask you, whether my advice, my assistance, my presence, my absence, my death, or my tortures, can bring you any relief? Can the most perfect admiration, the most watchful observance, the most ardent love, the most melting tenderness, the most resigned submission to your will,

make you amends for what you are to sacrifice to my happiness? If they can, fly, my lovely angel, to those arms which are ever open to receive and protect you; and to which, whether you bring yourself alone, or the riches of the world with you, is, in my opinion, an alternative not worth regarding. If, on the contrary, wisdom shall predominate, and, on the most mature reflection, inform you, that the sacrifice is too great; and if there be no way left to reconcile you to your father, and restore the peace of your dear mind, but by abandoning me, I conjure you drive me for ever from your thoughts, exert your resolution, and let no compassion for my sufferings bear the least weight in that tender bosom. Believe me, Madam, I so sincerely love you better than myself, that my great and principal end is your happiness. My first wish (why would not fortune indulge me in it?) was, and pardon me if I say, still is, to see you every moment the happiest of women: my second wish, is to hear you are so; but no misery on earth can equal mine, while I think you owe an uneasy moment to him who is, Madam, in every sense, and to every purpose, your devoted

THOMAS JONES.

What Sophia said, or did, or thought upon this letter, how often she read it, or whether more than once, shall all be left to our reader's imagination. The answer to it he may, perhaps, see hereafter; but not at present; for this reason, among others, that she did not now write any, and that for several good causes, one of which is this, that she had no paper, pen, nor ink.

In the evening, while Sophia was meditating on the letter she had received, or on something else, a violent noise from below disturbed her meditations. This noise was no other than a round bout at altercation between two persons. One of the combatants, by his voice, she immediately distinguished to be her father; but she did not so soon discover the shriller pipes to belong to the organ of her aunt Western, who was just arrived in town; and having, by means of one of her servants, who stopped at the Hercules Pillars,

lars, learnt where her brother lodged, she drove directly to his lodgings.

We shall therefore take out leave at present of Sophia, and, with our usual good-breeding, attend her ladyship.

CHAP. IV.

IN WHICH SOPHIA IS DELIVERED FROM HER CONFINEMENT.

THE squire and the parson (for the landlord was now otherwise engaged) were smoking their pipes together, when the arrival of the lady was first signified. The squire no sooner heard her name, than he immediately ran down to usher her up stairs; for he was a great observer of such ceremonials, especially to his sister, of whom he stood more in awe than of any other human creature; though he never would own this, nor did he, perhaps, know it himself.

Mrs. Western, on her arrival in the dining-room, having flung herself into a chair, began thus to harangue. 'Well, surely no one ever had such an intolerable journey! I think the roads, since so many turnpike acts, are grown worse than ever. La, brother! how could you get into this odious place? No person of condition, I dare swear, ever set foot here before. — I don't know,' cries the squire; 'I think they do well enough; it was landlord recommended them. I thought, as he knew most of the quality, he could best shew me where to get among um. — Well, and where's my niece?' says the lady; 'have you been to wait upon Lady Bellaston yet?' — 'Ay, ay,' cries the squire, 'your niece is safe enough; she is up stairs in chamber. — How,' answered the lady, 'is my niece in this house, and doth she not know of my being here?' — 'No, nobody can well get to her,' says the squire, 'for she is under lock and key. I have her safe; I vetched her from my lady-cousin the first night I came to town, and I have taken care of her ever since; she is as secure as a fox in a bag, I promise you!' — 'Good Heaven!' returned Mrs. Western, 'what do I hear! I thought what a fine piece of work would be the consequence of my consent to your com-

ing to town yourself; nay, it was indeed your own headstrong will, nor can I charge myself with ever having consented to it. Did not you promise me, brother, that you would take none of these headstrong measures? Was it not by these headstrong measures that you forced my niece to run away from you in the country? Have you a mind to oblige her to take such another step? — Z—ds and the devil!' cries the squire, dashing his pipe on the ground, 'did ever mortal hear the like? when I expected you would have commended me for all I have done, to be fallen upon in this manner!' — 'How! brother,' said the lady, 'have I ever given you the least reason to imagine I should commend you for locking up your daughter? Have I not often told you, that women in a free country are not to be treated with such arbitrary power? We are as free as the men, and I heartily wish I could not say we deserve that freedom better. If you expect I should stay a moment longer in this wretched house, or that I should ever own you again as my relation, or that I should ever trouble myself again with the affairs of your family, I insist upon it that my niece be set at liberty this instant.' This she spoke with so commanding an air, standing with her back to the fire, with one hand behind her, and a pinch of snuff in the other, that I question whether Thalestris, at the head of her Amazons, ever made a more tremendous figure. It is no wonder, therefore, that the poor squire was not proof against the awe which she inspired. 'There,' he cried, throwing down the key, 'there it is! do what you please. I intended only to have kept her up till Blifil came to town, which can't be long; and now if any harm happens in the meantime, remember who is to be blamed for it.'

'I will answer it with my life,' cries Mrs. Western; 'but I shall not intermeddle at all, unless upon one condition; and that is, that you will commit the whole entirely to my care, without taking any one measure yourself, unless I shall eventually appoint you to act. If you ratify these preliminaries, brother, I yet will endeavour to preserve the honour of your family;

‘ly; if not, I shall continue in a neutral state.’

‘I pray you, good Sir,’ said the parson, ‘permit yourself to be admonished this once by her ladyship; peradventure, by commencing with young Madam Sophia, she will effect more than you have been able to penetrate by more rigorous measures.’

‘What dost thou open upon me?’ cries the squire. ‘If thou dost begin to babble, I shall whip thee in presently.’

‘Fie, brother,’ answered the lady, ‘is this language to a clergyman? Mr. Supple is a man of sense, and gives you the best advice; and the whole world, I believe, will concur in his opinion; but I must tell you, I expect an immediate answer to my categorical proposals. Either cede your daughter to my disposal, or take her wholly to your own surprising discretion; and then I here, before Mr. Supple, evacuate the garrison; and renounce you and your family for ever.’

‘I pray you, let me be a mediator,’ cries the parson: ‘let me supplicate you.’

‘Why, there lies the key on the table,’ cries the squire. ‘She may take unup, if she pleases; who hinders her?’

‘No, brother!’ answered the lady, ‘I insist on the formality of its being delivered me, with a full ratification of all the concessions stipulated.’

‘Why, then, I will deliver it to you—there ’tis,’ cries the squire. ‘I am sure, sister, you can’t accuse me of ever denying to trust my daughter to you. She hath a lived with you a whole year and more too a time, without my ever zeeing her.’

‘And it would have been happy for her,’ answered the lady, ‘if she had always lived with me. Nothing of this kind would have happened under my eye.’

‘Ay, certainly,’ cries he; ‘I only am to blame.’

‘Why, you are to blame, brother,’ answered she: ‘I have been often obliged to tell you so, and shall always be obliged to tell you so. However, I hope you will now amend, and gather so much experience from past errors, as not to defeat my wisest

‘machinations by your blunders. Indeed, brother, you are not qualified for these negotiations. All your whole scheme of politicks is wrong.’

‘I once more, therefore, insist; that you do not intermeddle. Remember only what is past; and—’

‘Z—ds and bl—d, sister!’ cries the squire, ‘what would you have me say?’

‘You are enough to provoke the devil.’

‘There now,’ said she; ‘just according to the old custom. I see, brother, there is no talking to you. I will appeal to Mr. Supple, who is a man of sense; if I said any thing which could put any human creature into a passion; but you are so wrong-headed every way!’

‘Let me beg you, Madam,’ said the parson, ‘not to irritate his worship.’

‘Irritate him!’ said the lady; ‘sure you are as great a fool as himself!’

‘Well, brother, since you have promised not to interfere, I will once more undertake the management of my niece. Lord have mercy upon all affairs which are under the directions of men! The head of one woman is worth a thousand of you! And now having summoned a servant to shew her to Sophia, she departed, bearing the key with her.’

She was no sooner gone; than the squire (having first shut the door) ejaculated twenty bitches; and as many hearty curses against her, not sparing himself for having ever thought of her estate; but added, ‘Now one hath been a slave so long, it would be a pity to lose it at last, for want of holding out a little longer. The bitch can’t live for ever, and I know I am down for it upon the will.’

The parson greatly commended this resolution; and now the squire having ordered in another bottle, which was his usual method when any thing either pleased or vexed him, did, by drinking plentifully of this medicinal julep, so totally wash away his choler, that his temper was become perfectly placid and serene, when Mrs. Western returned with Sophia into the room. The young lady had on her hat and capuchin; and the aunt acquainted Mr. Western, that she intended to take her niece with her to her own lodgings;

ings; 'For, indeed, brother,' says she, 'these rooms are not fit to receive a christian soul in.'—

'Very well, Madam,' quoth Western, 'whatever you please. The girl can never be in better hands than yours; and the parson here can do me the justice to say, that I have said fifty times behind your back, that you was one of the most sensible women in the world.'

'To this,' cries the parson, 'I am ready to bear testimony.'

'Nay, brother,' says Mrs. Western, 'I have always, I'm sure, given you as favourable a character. You must own you have a little too much hastiness in your temper; but when you will allow yourself time to reflect, I never knew a man more reasonable.'

'Why then, sister, if you think so,' said the squire, 'here's your good health with all my heart. I am a little passionate sometimes, but I scorn to bear any malice.—Sophy, do you be a good girl; and do everything your aunt orders you.'

'I have not the least doubt of her,' answered Mrs. Western. 'She hath had already an example before her eyes, in the behaviour of that wretch her cousin Harriet, who ruined herself by neglecting my advice. O brother! what think you? You was hardly gone out of hearing, when you set out for London, when who should arrive but that impudent fellow, with the odious Irish name—that Fitzpatrick. He broke abruptly upon me without notice, or I would not have seen him. He ran on a long unintelligible story about his wife, to which he forced me to give him a hearing; but I made him very little answer, and delivered him the letter from his wife, which I bid him answer himself. I suppose the wretch will endeavour to find me out; but I beg you will not see her, for I am determined I will not.'

'I see her?' answered the squire; 'you need not fear me. I'll gee no encouragement to such undutiful wenches. It is well for the fellow her husband, I was not at home. Od rabbit it, he should have taken a dance thru the horse-pond, I promise un.—You zee, Sophy, what undutifulness brings folks to. You

have an example in your own family.'

'Brother,' cries the aunt, 'you need not shock my niece by such odious repetitions. Why will you not leave every thing entirely to me?'—Well, well, I wull, I wull, said the squire.

And now Mrs. Western, luckily for Sophia, put an end to the conversation, by ordering chairs to be called; I say, luckily; for had it continued much longer, fresh matter of dissention would, most probably, have risen between the brother and sister; between whom education and sex made the only difference; for both were equally violent, and equally positive; they had both a vast affection for Sophia, and both a sovereign contempt for each other.

IN WHICH JONES RECEIVES A LETTER FROM SOPHIA, AND GOES TO A PLAY WITH MRS. MILLER AND PARTIDGE.

THE arrival of Black George in town, and the good offices which that grateful fellow had promised to do for his old benefactor, greatly comforted Jones in the midst of all the anxiety and uneasiness which he had suffered on the account of Sophia; from whom, by the means of the said George, he received the following answer to his letter; which Sophia, to whom the use of pen, ink, and paper, was restored with her liberty, wrote the very evening when she departed from her confinement.

SIR,

AS I do not doubt your sincerity in what you write, you will be pleased to hear that some of my afflictions are at an end, by the arrival of my aunt Western, with whom I am at present, and with whom I enjoy all the liberty I can desire. One promise my aunt hath insisted on my making, which is, that I will not see or converse with any person without her knowledge and consent. This promise I have most solemnly given, and shall most inviolably keep:

and

and though she hath not expressly forbidden me writing, yet that must be an omission from forgetfulness; or this, perhaps, is included in the word, conversing. However, as I cannot but consider this as a breach of her generous confidence in my honour, you cannot expect that I shall, after this, continue to write myself, or to receive letters, without her knowledge. A promise is with me a very sacred thing, and to be extended to every thing understood from it, as well as to what is expressed by it; and this consideration may, perhaps, on reflection, afford you some comfort. But why should I mention a comfort to you of this kind? For though there is one thing in which I can never comply with the best of fathers, yet am I firmly resolved never to act in defiance of him, or to take any step of consequence without his consent. A firm persuasion of this, must teach you to divert your thoughts from what Fortune hath (perhaps) made impossible. This your own interest persuades you. This may reconcile you, I hope, to Mr. Allworthy; and if it will, you have my injunctions to pursue it. Accidents have laid some obligations on me, and your good intentions probably more. Fortune may, perhaps, be some time kinder to us both than at present. Believe this, that I shall always think of you as I think you deserve; and am, Sir, your obliged humble servant,

• SOPHIA WESTERN.

• I charge you write to me no more — at present at least; and accept this, which is now of no service to me; which I know you must want; and think you owe the trifle only to that fortune by which you found it.*

A child who hath just learnt his letters, would have spelt this letter out in less time than Jones took in reading it. The sensations it occasioned, were a mixture of joy and grief; somewhat like what divide the mind of a good man, when he peruses the will of his deceased friend, in which a large legacy, which his distresses make the more

welcome, is bequeathed to him. Upon the whole, however, he was more pleased than displeased; and indeed the reader may probably wonder that he was displeased at all; but the reader is not quite so much in love as was poor Jones: and love is a disease, which, though it may in some instances resemble a consumption, (which it sometimes causes) in others proceeds in direct opposition to it; and particularly in this, that it never flatters itself, or sees any one symptom in a favourable light.

One thing gave him compleat satisfaction, which was, that his mistress had regained her liberty, and was now with a lady where she might, at least, assure herself of a decent treatment. Another comfortable circumstance was, the reference which she made to her promise of never marrying any other man: for however disinterested he might imagine his passion, and notwithstanding all the generous overtures made in his letter, I very much question whether he could have heard a more afflicting piece of news, than that Sophia was married to another, though the match had been never so great, and never so likely to end in making her compleatly happy. That refined degree of Platonick affection which is absolutely detached from the flesh, and is, indeed, entirely and purely spiritual, is a gift confined to the female part of the creation; many of whom I have heard declare, (and, doubtless, with great truth) that they would, with the utmost readiness, resign a lover to a rival, when such resignation was proved to be necessary for the temporal interest of such lover. Hence, therefore, I conclude, that this affection is in nature; though I cannot pretend to say, I have ever seen an instance of it.

Mr. Jones having spent three hours in reading and kissing the aforesaid letter, and being, at last, in a state of good spirits, from the last-mentioned considerations, he agreed to carry an appointment which he had before made, into execution: this was, to attend Mrs. Miller, and her younger daughter, into the gallery at the playhouse, and to admit Mr. Partridge as one of the company. For as Jones had really

* Meaning, perhaps, the bank-bill for 100*l*. that

that taste for humour which many affect, be expected to enjoy much entertainment in the criticisms of Partridge; from whom he expected the simple dictates of nature, unimproved indeed, but likewise unadulterated by art.

In the first row, then, of the first gallery, did Mr. Jones, Mrs. Miller, her youngest daughter, and Partridge, take their places. Partridge immediately declared, it was the finest place he had ever been in. When the first musick was played, he said, it was a wonder how so many fiddlers could play at one time, without putting one another out. While the fellow was lighting the upper candles, he cried out to Mrs. Miller, 'Look, look, Madam! the very picture of the man in the end of the common-prayer-book, before the gunpowder-treason service.' Nor could he help observing with a sigh, when all the candles were lighted, that here were candles enough burnt in one night, to keep an honest poor family for a twelvemonth.

As soon as the play, which was Hamlet Prince of Denmark, began, Partridge was all attention; nor did he break silence, till the entrance of the ghost; upon which he asked Jones, 'What man that was in the strange dress: "Something," said he, "like what I have seen in a picture. Sure it is not armour, is it?" Jones answered, "That is the ghost." To which Partridge replied, with a smile, "Persuade me to that, Sir, if you can. Though I cannot say I ever actually saw a ghost in my life, yet I am certain I should know one, if I saw him, better than that comes to. No, no, Sir; ghosts don't appear in such dresses as that, neither." In this mistake, which caused much laughter in the neighbourhood of Partridge, he was suffered to continue, till the scene between the ghost and Hamlet; when Partridge gave that credit to Mr. Garrick, which he had denied to Jones, and fell into so violent a trembling, that his knees knocked against each other. Jones asked him what was the matter, and whether he was afraid of the warrior upon the stage? 'O la, Sir,' said he, 'I perceive now it is what you told me. I am not afraid of any thing; for I know it is but a play: and, if it really was a ghost, it could do one no harm at such a

distance, and in so much company; and yet if I was frightened, I am not the only person.' — 'Why, who,' cries Jones, 'dost thou take to be such a coward here besides thyself?' — 'Nay, you may call me coward if you will; but if that little man there upon the stage is not frightened, I never saw any man frightened in my life. Ay, ay, go along with you! Ay, to be sure! Who a fool then! Will you? Lud have mercy upon such fool-hardiness! Whatever happens, it is good enough for you. — Follow you! I'd follow the devil as soon: nay, perhaps, it is the devil; for they say he can put on what likeness he pleases. — Oh! here he is again. No farther! no, you have gone far enough already: farther than I'd have gone for all the king's dominions!' Jones offered to speak, but Partridge cried, 'Hush, hush, dear Sir! don't you hear him?' And during the whole speech of the ghost, he sat with his eyes fixed, partly on the ghost, and partly on Hamlet, and with his mouth open; the same passions which succeeded each other in Hamlet, succeeding likewise in him.

When the scene was over, Jones said, 'Why, Partridge, you exceed my expectations. You enjoy the play more than I conceived possible.' — 'Nay, Sir,' answered Partridge, 'if you are not afraid of the devil, I can't help it; but, to be sure, it is natural to be surprized at such things; though I know there is nothing in them: not that it was the ghost that surprized me, neither; for I should have known that to have been only a man in a strange dress: but when I saw the little man so frightened himself, it was that which took hold of me.' — 'And dost thou imagine then, Partridge,' cries Jones, 'that he was really frightened?' — 'Nay, Sir,' said Partridge, 'did not you yourself observe afterwards, when he found it was his own father's spirit, and how he was murdered in the garden, how his fear forsook him by degrees, and he was struck dumb with sorrow, as it were, just as I should have been, had it been my own case? But hush! O la! what noise is that! There he is again! — Well, to be certain, though I know there is nothing at all in it, I am glad I am

not

not down yonder, where those men are! Then turning his eyes again upon Hamlet, 'Ay, you may draw your sword; what signifies a sword against the power of the devil?'

During the second act, Partridge made very few remarks. He greatly admired the fineness of the dresses; nor could he help observing upon the king's countenance, 'Well,' said he, 'how people may be deceived by faces! *Nulla fides fronti*, is, I find, a true saying. Who would think, by looking in the king's face, that he had ever committed a murder?' He then enquired after the ghost; but Jones, who intended he should be surprized, gave him no other satisfaction, than that he might possibly see him again soon, and in a flash of fire.

Partridge sat in fearful expectation of this: and now, when the ghost made his next appearance, Partridge cried out, 'There, Sir, now! what say you now? is he frightened now, or no? As much frightened as you think me; and, to be sure, nobody can help some fears; I would not be in so bad a condition as what's his name, Squire Hamlet, is there, for all the world. Bless me! what's become of the spirit? As I am a living soul, I thought I saw him sink into the earth!'—'Indeed, you saw right,' answered Jones. 'Well, well,' cries Partridge, 'I know it is only a play; and besides, if there was any thing in all this, Madam Miller would not laugh so: for as to you, Sir, you would not be afraid, I believe, if the devil was here in person.—There, there—ay, no wonder you are in such a passion; shake the vile, wicked wretch to pieces! If she was my own mother, I should serve her so. To be sure, all duty to a mother is forfeited by such wicked doings.—Ay, go about your business; I hate the sight of you!'

Our critick was now pretty silent till the play which Hamlet introduces before the king. This he did not at first understand, till Jones explained it to him; but he no sooner entered into the spirit of it, than he began to bless himself that he had never committed murder. Then turning to Mrs. Miller, he asked her, if she did not imagine the king looked as if he was touched; 'Though he is,' said he, 'a

good actor, and doth all he can to hide it. Well, I would not have so much to answer for, as that wicked man there hath, to sit upon a much higher chair than he sits upon. No wonder he run away—for your sake, I'll never trust an innocent face again.'

The grave-digging scene next engaged the attention of Partridge, who expressed much surprize at the number of skulls thrown upon the stage. To which Jones answered, that it was one of the most famous burial-places about town. 'No wonder then,' cries Partridge, 'that the place is haunted. But I never saw in my life a worse grave-digger. I had a sexton when I was a clerk, that should have dug three graves while he is digging one. The fellow handles a spade as if it was the first time he had ever had one in his hands.—Ay, ay, you may sing. You had rather sing than work, I believe.' Upon Hamlet's taking up the skull, he cried out, 'Well, it is strange to see how fearless some men are: I never could bring myself to touch any thing belonging to a dead man, on any account. He seemed frightened enough too at the ghost, I thought. *Nemo omnibus horis sapit.*'

Little more worth remembering, occurred during the play; at the end of which, Jones asked him, which of the players he liked best. To this he answered, with some appearance of indignation at the question, 'The king, without doubt.'—'Indeed, Mr. Partridge,' says Mrs. Miller, 'you are not of the same opinion with the town; for they are all agreed, that Hamlet is acted by the best player who was ever on the stage.'—'He the best player!' cries Partridge, with a contemptuous sneer, 'why, I could act as well as he myself. I am sure, if I had seen a ghost, I should have looked in the very same manner, and done just as he did. And then, to be sure, in that scene, as you called it, between him and his mother, where you told me he acted so fine, why, Lord help me! any man, that is, any good man, that had such a mother, would have done exactly the same; I know you are only joking with me; but, indeed, Madam, though I was never at a play

in London, yet I have seen acting before in the country; and the king for my money; he speaks all his words distinctly, half as loud again as the other. Any body may see he is an actor.'

While Mrs. Miller was thus engaged in conversation with Partridge, a lady came up to Mr. Jones, whom he immediately knew to be Mrs. Fitzpatrick. She said she had seen him from the other part of the gallery, and had taken that opportunity of speaking to him, as she had something to say, which might be of great service to himself. She then acquainted him with her lodgings, and made him an appointment the next day in the morning; which, upon recollection, she presently changed to the afternoon; at which time Jones promised to attend her.

Thus ended the adventure of the playhouse; where Partridge had afforded great mirth, not only to Jones and Mrs. Miller, but to all who sat within hearing, who were more attentive to what he said, than to any thing that passed on the stage.

He durst not go to bed all that night, for fear of the ghost; and for many nights after, sweated for two or three hours before he went to sleep, with the same apprehensions; and waked several times in great horrors, crying out, 'Lord have mercy upon us! there it is.'

CHAP. VI.

IN WHICH THE HISTORY IS OBLIGED TO GO BACK.

IT is almost impossible for the best parent to observe an exact impartiality to his children, even though no superior merit should bias his affection; but sure a parent can hardly be blamed, when that superiority determines his preference.

As I regard all the personages of this history, in the light of my children, so I must confess the same inclination of partiality to Sophia; and for that, I hope the reader will allow me the same excuse, from the superiority of her character.

This extraordinary tenderness, which I have for my heroine, never suffers

me to quit her any long time without the utmost reluctance. I could now, therefore, return impatiently to enquire, what hath happened to this lovely creature, since her departure from her father's, but that I am obliged first to pay a short visit to Mr. Blifil.

Mr. Western, in the first confusion into which his mind was cast, upon the sudden news he received of his daughter, and in his first hurry to go after her, had not once thought of sending any account of the discovery to Blifil. He had not gone far, however, before he recollected himself; and accordingly stopped at the very first inn he came to, and dispatched away a messenger to acquaint Blifil with his having found Sophia, and with his firm resolution to marry her to him immediately, if he would come up after him to town.

As the love which Blifil had for Sophia was of that violent kind, which nothing but the loss of her fortune, or some such accident, could lessen, his inclination to the match was not at all altered by her having run away, though he was obliged to lay this to his own account. He very readily, therefore, embraced this offer. Indeed, he now proposed the gratification of a very strong passion besides avarice, by marrying this young lady; and this was, hatred: for he concluded, that matrimony afforded an equal opportunity of satisfying either hatred or love; and this opinion is very probably verified by much experience. To say the truth, if we are to judge by the ordinary behaviour of married persons to each other, we shall, perhaps, be apt to conclude, that the generality seek the indulgence of the former passion only in their union of every thing but of hearts.

There was one difficulty, however, in his way, and this arose from Mr. Allworthy. That good man, when he found by the departure of Sophia (for neither that, nor the cause of it, could be concealed from him) the great aversion which she had for his nephew, began to be seriously concerned that he had been deceived into carrying matters so far. He by no means concurred with the opinions of those parents, who think it as immaterial to consult the inclinations of their children, in the affair of marriage, as to solicit the good

good pleasure of their servants, when they intend to take a journey; and who are, by law, or decency at least, withheld often from using absolute force. On the contrary, as he esteemed the institution to be of the most sacred kind, he thought every preparatory caution necessary to preserve it holy and inviolate; and very wisely concluded, that the surest way to effect this, was by laying the foundation in previous affection.

Blifil, indeed, soon cured his uncle of all anger on the score of deceit, by many vows and protestations that he had been deceived himself, with which the many declarations of Western very well tallied; but how to persuade Allworthy to consent to the renewing his addresses, was a matter of such apparent difficulty, that the very appearance was sufficient to have deterred a less enterprising genius; but this young gentleman so well knew his own talents, that nothing within the province of cunning seemed to him hard to be achieved.

Here then he represented the violence of his own affection, and the hopes of subduing aversion in the lady by perseverance. He begged, that in an affair on which depended all his future repose, he might at least be at liberty to try all fair means for success. Heaven forbid, he said, that he should ever think of prevailing by any other than the most gentle methods! 'Besides, Sir,' said he, 'if they fail, you may then (which will be surely time enough) deny your consent.' He urged the great and eager desire which Mr. Western had for the match, and lastly, he made great use of the name of Jones, to whom he imputed all that had happened; and for whom, he said, to preserve so valuable a young lady, was even an act of charity.

All these arguments were well seconded by Thwackum, who dwelt a little stronger on the authority of parents, than Mr. Blifil himself had done. He ascribed the measures which Mr. Blifil was desirous to take, to christian motives; 'And though,' says he, 'the good young gentleman hath mentioned charity last, I am almost convinced it is his first and principal consideration.'

Square, possibly, had he been present, would have sung to the same tune,

though in a different key, and would have discovered much moral fitness in the proceeding; but he was now gone to Bath, for the recovery of his health.

Allworthy, though not without reluctance, at last yielded to the desires of his nephew. He said, he would accompany him to London, where he might be at liberty to use every honest endeavour to gain the lady: 'But I declare,' said he, 'I will never give my consent to any absolute force being put on her inclinations, nor shall you ever have her, unless she can be brought freely to compliance.'

Thus did the affection of Allworthy for his nephew, betray the superior understanding to be triumphed over by the inferior; and thus is the prudence of the best of heads often defeated, by the tenderness of the best of hearts.

Blifil having obtained this unhopedor acquiescence in his uncle, rested not till he carried his purpose into execution: and as no immediate business required Mr. Allworthy's presence in the country, and little preparation is necessary to men for a journey, they set out the very next day; and arrived in town that evening, when Mr. Jones, as we have seen, was diverting himself with Partridge, at the play.

The morning after his arrival, Mr. Blifil waited on Mr. Western, by whom he was most kindly and graciously received, and from whom he had every possible assurance (perhaps more than was possible) that he should very shortly be as happy as Sophia could make him; nor would the squire suffer the young gentleman to return to his uncle, till he had, almost against his will, carried him to his sister.

CHAP. VII.

IN WHICH MR. WESTERN PAYS A VISIT TO HIS SISTER, IN COMPANY WITH MR. BLIFIL.

MRS. Western was reading a lecture on prudence and matrimonial politicks to her niece, when her brother and Blifil broke in, with less ceremony than the laws of visiting require. Sophia no sooner saw Blifil, than she turned pale, and almost lost the use of all her faculties; but her

sunt on the contrary waxed red, and having all her faculties at command, began to exert her tongue on the squire.

'Brother,' said she, 'I am astonished at your behaviour: will you never learn any regard to decorum? Will you still look upon every apartment as your own, or as belonging to one of your country tenants? Do you think yourself at liberty to invade the privacies of women of condition, without the least decency or notice?'—'Why, what a pox is the matter now?' quoth the squire; 'one would think I had caught you at—' 'None of your brutality, Sir, I beseech you,' answered she. 'You have surprized my poor niece so, that she can hardly, I see, support herself.—Go, my dear, retire; and endeavour to recruit your spirits; for I see you have occasion.' At which words, Sophia, who never received a more welcome command, hastily withdrew.

'To be sure, sister,' cries the squire, 'you are mad, when I have brought Mr. Blifil here to court her, to force her away!'

'Sure, brother,' says she, 'you are worse than mad, when you know in what situation affairs are, to—I am sure, I ask Mr. Blifil pardon, but he knows very well to whom to impute so disagreeable a reception. For my own part, I am sure I shall always be very glad to see Mr. Blifil; but his own good sense would not have suffered him to proceed so abruptly, had not you compelled him to it.'

Blifil bowed, and stammered, and looked like a fool; but Western, without giving him time to form a speech for the purpose, answered, 'Well, well, I am to blame, if you will; I always am, certainly; but come, let the girl be fetched back again, or let Mr. Blifil go to her. He's come up on purpose, and there's no time to be lost.'

'Brother,' cries Mrs. Western, 'Mr. Blifil, I am confident, understands himself better, than to think of seeing my niece any more this morning, after what hath happened. Women are of a more nice contexture; and our spirits, when disordered, are not to be recomposed in a moment. Had you suffered Mr. Blifil

to have sent his compliments to my niece, and to have desired the favour of waiting on her in the afternoon, I should possibly have prevailed on her to have seen him; but now I despair of bringing about any such matter.'

'I am very sorry, Madam,' cried Blifil, 'that Mr. Western's extraordinary kindness to me, which I can never enough acknowledge, should have occasioned——' 'Indeed, Sir,' said she, interrupting him, 'you need make no apologies, we all know my brother so well.'

'I don't care what any body knows of me!' answered the squire; 'but when must he come to see her? for consider, I tell you, he is come up on purpose, and so is Allworthy.'—'Brother,' said she, 'whatever message Mr. Blifil thinks proper to send to my niece, shall be delivered to her; and I suppose she will want no instructions to make a proper answer! I am convinced she will not refuse to see Mr. Blifil at a proper time.'—

'The devil she won't!' answered the squire. 'Odsbud! don't we know—I say nothing; but some folk are wiser than all the world. If I might have had my will, she had not run away before: and now I expect to hear every moment she is guone again. For, as great a fool as some folk thinks me, I know very well she hates——' 'No matter, brother,' replied Mrs. Western; 'I will not hear my niece abused. It is a reflection on my family. She is an honour to it; and she will be an honour to it, I promise you. I will pawn my whole reputation in the world on her conduct. I shall be glad to see you, brother, in the afternoon; for I have somewhat of importance to mention to you. At present, Mr. Blifil, as well as you, must excuse me; for I am in haste to dress.'—'Well, but,' said the squire, 'do appoint a time!'—'Indeed,' said she, 'I can appoint no time. I tell you, I will see you in the afternoon.'—'What the devil would you have me do?' cries the squire, turning to Blifil; 'I can no more turn her, than a beagle can turn an old hare. Perhaps she will be in a better humour in the afternoon.'—'I am condemned, I see, Sir, to misfortune,' answered Blifil, 'but

‘but I shall always own my obligations to you.’ He then took a ceremonious leave of Mrs. Western, who was altogether as ceremonious on her part; and then they departed, the squire muttering to himself with an oath, that Blifil should see his daughter in the afternoon.

If Mr. Western was little pleased with this interview, Blifil was less. As to the former, he imputed the whole behaviour of his sister to her humour only, and to her dissatisfaction at the omission of ceremony in the visit; but Blifil saw a little deeper into things. He suspected somewhat of more consequence, from two or three words which dropt from the lady; and, to say the truth, he suspected right, as will appear when I have unfolded the several matters which will be contained in the following chapter.

CHAP. VIII.

SCHEMES OF LADY BELLASTON FOR THE RUIN OF JONES.

LOVE had taken too deep a root in the mind of Lord Fellamar, to be plucked up by the rude hands of Mr. Western. In the heat of resentment he had indeed given a commission to Captain Egglane, which the captain had far exceeded in the execution; nor had it been executed at all, had his lordship been able to find the captain after he had seen Lady Bellaston, which was in the afternoon of the day after he had received the affront; but so industrious was the captain in the discharge of his duty, that having after long enquiry found out the squire’s lodgings very late in the evening, he sat up all night at a tavern, that he might not miss the squire in the morning, and by that means missed the revocation which my lord had sent to his lodgings.

In the afternoon then, next after the intended rape of Sophia, his lordship, as we have said, made a visit to Lady Bellaston, who laid open so much of the character of the squire, that his lordship plainly saw the absurdity he had been guilty of in taking any offence at his words, especially as he had those honourable designs on his daughter. He then unbosomed the violence of

his passion to Lady Bellaston, who readily undertook the cause, and encouraged him with certain assurance of a most favourable reception from all the elders of the family, and from the father himself when he should be sober, and should be made acquainted with the nature of the offer made to his daughter. The only danger, she said, lay in the fellow she had formerly mentioned; who, though a beggar and a vagabond, had, by some means or other, she knew not what, procured himself tolerable cloaths, and passed for a gentleman. ‘Now,’ says she, ‘as I have, for the sake of my cousin, made it my business to enquire after this fellow, I have luckily found out his lodgings:’ with which she then acquainted his lordship. ‘I am thinking, my lord,’ added she, ‘for this fellow is too mean for your personal resentment) whether it would not be possible for your lordship to contrive some method of having him pressed, and sent on board a ship. Neither law nor conscience forbid this project; for the fellow, I promise you, however well dressed, is but a vagabond, and as proper as any fellow in the streets to be pressed into the service; and as for the conscientious part, surely the preservation of a young lady from such ruin is a most meritorious act; nay, with regard to the fellow himself, unless he could succeed (which Heaven forbid!) with my cousin, it may probably be the means of preserving him from the gallows, and perhaps may make his fortune in an honest way.’

Lord Fellamar very heartily thanked her ladyship for the part which she was pleased to take in the affair, upon the success of which his whole future happiness entirely depended. He said, he saw at present no objection to the pressing scheme, and would consider of putting it in execution. He then most earnestly recommended to her ladyship, to do him the honour of immediately mentioning his proposals to the family; to whom, he said, he offered a *carte blanche*, and would settle his fortune in almost any manner they should require: and after uttering many exaltations and raptures concerning Sophia, he took his leave and departed; but not before he had received the strongest charge to beware of Jones, and to

lose

lose no time in securing his person where he should no longer be in a capacity of making any attempts to the ruin of the young lady.

The moment Mrs. Western was arrived at her lodgings, a card was dispatched, with her compliments to Lady Bellafton; who no fooner received it, than, with the impatience of a lover, fhe flew to her coufin; rejoicing at this fair opportunity, which, beyond her hopes, offered itfelf: for fhe was much better pleafed with the profpect of making the propofals to a woman of fense, and who knew the world, than to a gentleman whom fhe honoured with the appellation of Hottentot; though, indeed, from him fhe apprehended no danger of a refusal.

The two ladies being met, after very fhort previous ceremonials, fell to bufinefs, which was indeed almoft as foon concluded as begun; for Mrs. Western no fooner heard the name of Lord Fellamar, than her cheeks glowed with pleafure; but when fhe was acquainted with the eagernels of his paffion, the earneftnefs of his propofals, and the generofity of his offer, fhe declared her full fatisfaction in the moft explicit terms.

In the progrefs of their converfation, their difcourfe turned to Jones; and both coufins very pathetically lamented the unfortunate attachment which both agreed Sophia had to that young fellow; and Mrs. Western entirely attributed it to the folly of her brother's management. She concluded, however, at laft, with declaring her confidence in the good underftanding of her niece; 'who, though fhe would not give up her affection in favour of Blifil, will, I doubt not,' fays fhe, 'foon be prevailed upon to facrifice a fimple inclination to the addrefses of a fine gentleman, who brings her both a title and a large eftate: for, indeed,' added fhe, 'I muft do Sophy the juftice to confefs, this Blifil is but a hideous kind of fellow; as you know, Bellafton, all country gentlemen are; and hath nothing but his fortune to recommend him.'

'Nay,' faid Lady Bellafton, 'I don't then fo much wonder at my coufin; for I promife you, this Jones is a very agreeable fellow, and hath one virtue, which the men fay is a great recommendation to us. What

'do you think, Bell!—I fhall certainly make you laugh; nay, I can hardly tell you myfelf for laughing—Will you believe that the fellow hath had the affurance to make love to me? But if you fhould be inclined to difbelieve it, here is evidence enough, his own hand-writing, I affure you.' She then delivered her coufin the letter with the propofals of marriage; which if the reader hath a defire to fee, he will find already on record, in the fifteenth book of this hiftory.

'Upon my word, I am aftonifhed,' faid Mrs. Western: 'this is, indeed, a mafter-piece of affurance! With your leave, I may poffibly make fome ufe of this letter.'—'You have my full liberty,' cries Lady Bellafton, 'to apply it to what purpofe you pleafe. However, I would not have it fhewn to any but Mifs Western; nor to her, unlefs you find occafion.'—'Well, and how did you ufe the fellow?' returned Mrs. Western. 'Not as a husband,' faid the lady; 'I am not married, I promife you, my dear. You know, Bell, I have tried the comforts once already; and once, I think, is enough for any reafonable woman.'

This letter Lady Bellafton thought would certainly turn the balance againft Jones, in the mind of Sophia; and fhe was emboldened to give it up, partly by her hopes of having him instantly difpatched out of the way, and partly by having fured the evidence of Honour; who, upon founding her, fhe faw fufficient reafon to imagine, was prepared to testify whatever fhe pleafed.

But perhaps the reader may wonder why Lady Bellafton, who in her heart hated Sophia, fhould be fo defirous of promoting a match, which was fo much to the intereft of the young lady. Now, I fhould defire fuch readers to look carefully into human nature, page almoft the laft, and there he will find, in fcarce legible characters, that women, notwithstanding the prepofterous behaviour of mothers, aunts, &c. in matrimonial matters, do in reality think it fo great a misfortune to have their inclinations in love thwarted, that they imagine they ought never to carry enmity higher than upon thefe difappointments: again, he will find it written, much about the fame place, that
a woman

a woman who hath once been pleased with the possession of a man, will go above half way to the devil, to prevent any other woman from enjoying the same.

If he will not be contented with these reasons, I freely confess I see no other motive to the actions of that lady, unless we will conceive she was bribed by Lord Fellamar, which for my own part I see no cause to suspect.

Now, this was the affair which Mrs. Western was preparing to introduce to Sophia, by some prefatory discourse on the folly of love, and on the wisdom of legal prostitution for hire, when her brother and Blifil broke abruptly in upon her; and hence arose all that coldness in her behaviour to Blifil; which, though the squire, as was usual with him, imputed to a wrong cause, infused into Blifil himself (he being a much more cunning man) a suspicion of the real truth.

CHAP. IX.

IN WHICH JONES PAYS A VISIT TO MRS. FITZPATRICK.

THE reader may now, perhaps, be pleased to return with us to Mr. Jones, who, at the appointed hour, attended on Mrs. Fitzpatrick; but before we relate the conversation which now passed, it may be proper, according to our method, to return a little back, and to account for so great an alteration of behaviour in this lady; that from changing her lodgings principally to avoid Mr. Jones, she had now industriously, as hath been seen, sought this interview.

And here we shall need only to resort to what happened the preceding day, when hearing from Lady Bellaston, that Mr. Western was arrived in town, she went to pay her duty to him, at his lodgings at Piccadilly; where she was received with many scurvy compellations, too coarse to be repeated, and was even threatened to be kicked out of doors. From hence an old servant of her aunt Western, with whom she was well acquainted, conducted her to the lodgings of that lady, who treated her not more kindly, but more politely; or, to say the truth, with rudeness in another way. In short, she returned from both, plainly convinced not only that her scheme of re-

conciliation had proved abortive, but that she must for ever give over all thoughts of bringing it about by any means whatever. From this moment, desire of revenge only filled her mind; and in this temper meeting Jones at the play, an opportunity seemed to her to occur of effecting the purpose.

The reader must remember that he was acquainted by Mrs. Fitzpatrick, in the account she gave of her own story, with the fondness Mrs. Western had formerly shewn for Mr. Fitzpatrick at Bath; from the disappointment of which, Mrs. Fitzpatrick derived the great bitterness her aunt had expressed towards her. She had, therefore, no doubt, but that the good lady would as easily listen to the addresses of Mr. Jones, as she had before done to the other; for the superiority of charms was clearly on the side of Mr. Jones; and the advance which her aunt had since made in age, she concluded (how justly I will not say) was an argument rather in favour of her project than against it.

Therefore, when Jones attended, after a previous declaration of her desire of serving him, arising, as she said, from a firm assurance how much she should, by so doing, oblige Sophia; and after some excuses for her former disappointment, and after acquainting Mr. Jones in whose custody his mistress was, of which she thought him ignorant; she very explicitly mentioned her scheme to him, and advised him to make sham addresses to the older lady, in order to procure an easy access to the younger; informing him, at the same time, of the success which Mr. Fitzpatrick had formerly owed to the very same stratagem.

Mr. Jones expressed great gratitude to the lady for the kind intentions towards him which she had expressed, and indeed testified, by this proposal; but, besides intimating some diffidence of success from the lady's knowledge of his love to her niece, which had not been her case in regard to Mr. Fitzpatrick, he said, he was afraid Miss Western would never agree to an imposition of this kind, as well from her utter detestation of all fallacy, as from her avowed duty to her aunt.

Mrs. Fitzpatrick was a little nettled at this; and, indeed, if it may not be called a lapse of the tongue, it was a small

small deviation from politeness in Jones; and into which he scarce would have fallen, had not the delight he felt in praising Sophia, hurried him out of all reflection; for this commendation of one cousin, was more than a tacit rebuke on the other.

‘Indeed, Sir,’ answered the lady, with some warmth, ‘I cannot think there is any thing easier than to cheat an old woman with a profession of love, when her complexion is amorous; and though she is my aunt, I must say, there never was a more liquorish one than her ladyship. Can’t you pretend that the despair of possessing her niece, from her being promised to Bliss, has made you turn your thoughts towards her? As to my cousin Sophia, I can’t imagine her to be such a simpleton, as to have the least scruple on such an account; or to conceive any harm in punishing one of these hags for the many mischiefs they bring upon families, by their tragick-comick passions; for which I think it is pity they are not punishable by law. I had no such scruple myself; and yet I hope my cousin Sophia will not think it an affront, when I say she cannot detest every real species of falshood more than her cousin Fitzpatrick. To my aunt, indeed, I pretend no duty; nor doth she deserve any. However, Sir, I have given you my advice, and if you decline pursuing it, I shall have the less opinion of your understanding—that’s all.’

Jones now clearly saw the error he had committed, and exerted his utmost power to rectify it; but he only faltered and stuttered into nonsense and contradiction. To say the truth, it is often safer to abide by the consequences of the first blunder, than to endeavour to rectify it; for, by such endeavours, we generally plunge deeper, instead of extricating ourselves; and few persons will, on such occasions, have the good-nature which Mrs. Fitzpatrick displayed to Jones, by saying with a smile, ‘You need attempt no more excuses; for I can easily forgive a real lover whatever is the effect of fondness for his mistress.’

She then renewed her proposal, and very fervently recommended it; omitting no argument which her invention could

suggest on the subject: for she was so violently incensed against her aunt, that scarce any thing was capable of affording her equal pleasure with exposing her; and, like a true woman, she would see no difficulties in the execution of a favourite scheme.

Jones, however, persisted in declining the undertaking, which had not, indeed, the least probability of success. He easily perceived the motives which induced Mrs. Fitzpatrick to be so eager in pressing her advice. He said, he would not deny the tender and passionate regard he had for Sophia; but was so conscious of the inequality of their situations, that he could never flatter himself so far, as to hope that so divine a young lady would condescend to think on so unworthy a man; nay, he protested, he could scarce bring himself to wish the should. He concluded with a profession of generous sentiments, which we have not at present leisure to insert.

There are some fine women (for I dare not here speak in too general terms) with whom self is so predominant, that they never detach it from any subject; and, as vanity is with them a ruling principle, they are apt to lay hold of whatever praise they meet with; and, though the property of others, convey it to their own use. In the company of these ladies it is impossible to say any thing handsome of another woman, which they will not apply to themselves; nay, they often improve the praise they seize; as, for instance, if her beauty, her wit, her gentility, her good humour deserve so much commendation, what do I deserve, who possess those qualities in so much more eminent a degree?

To these ladies, a man often recommends himself, while he is commending another woman; and while he is expressing ardour and generous sentiments for his mistress, they are considering what a charming lover this man would make to them, who can feel all this tenderness for an inferior degree of merit. Of this, strange as it may seem, I have seen many instances besides Mrs. Fitzpatrick, to whom all this really happened; and who now began to feel a somewhat for Mr. Jones, the symptoms of which she much sooner understood than poor Sophia had formerly done.

To

To say the truth, perfect beauty, in both sexes, is a more irresistible object than it is generally thought; for, notwithstanding some of us are contented with more homely lots, and learn by rote (as children are to repeat what gives them no idea) to despise outside, and to value more solid charms; yet, I have always observed, at the approach of consummate beauty, that these more solid charms, only shine with that kind of lustre which the stars have after the rising of the sun.

When Jones had finished his exclamations, many of which would have become the mouth of Oroondates himself, Mrs. Fitzpatrick heaved a deep sigh; and taking her eyes off from Jones, on whom they had been some time fixed, and dropping them on the ground, she cried, 'Indeed, Mr. Jones, I pity you! but it is the curse of such tenderness, to be thrown away on those who are insensible of it. I know my cousin better than you, Mr. Jones; and I must say, any woman who makes no return to such a passion, and such a person, is unworthy of both.'

'Sure, Madam,' said Jones, 'you can't mean—' 'Mean!' cries Mrs. Fitzpatrick, 'I know not what I mean; there is something, I think, in true tenderness, bewitching; few women ever meet with it in men, and fewer still know how to value it when they do. I never heard such truly noble sentiments; and I can't tell how it is, but you force one to believe you. Sure she must be the most contemptible of women, who can overlook such merit.'

The manner and look with which all this was spoke, infused a suspicion into Jones, which we don't care to convey in direct words to the reader. Instead of making any answer, he said, 'I am afraid, Madam, I have made too tiresome a visit; and offered to take his leave.'

'Not at all, Sir,' answered Mrs. Fitzpatrick. 'Indeed, I pity you, Mr. Jones; indeed, I do: but if you are going, consider of the scheme I have mentioned. I am convinced you will approve it, and let me see you again as soon as you can. Tomorrow morning, if you will, or at least some time to-morrow. I shall be at home all day.'

Jones then, after many expressions of thanks, very respectfully retired; nor could Mrs. Fitzpatrick forbear making him a present of a look at parting, by which, if he had understood nothing, he must have had no understanding in the language of the eyes. In reality, it confirmed his resolution of returning to her no more; for, faulty as he hath hitherto appeared in this history, his whole thoughts were now so confined to his Sophia, that, I believe, no woman upon earth could have now drawn him into an act of inconstancy.

Fortune, however, who was not his friend, resolved, as he intended to give her no second opportunity, to make the best of this; and accordingly produced the tragical incident, which we are now in sorrowful notes to record.

CHAP. X.

THE CONSEQUENCE OF THE PRECEDING VISIT.

MR. Fitzpatrick having received the letter before mentioned, from Mrs. Western, and being by that means acquainted with the place to which his wife was retired, returned directly to Bath, and thence, the day after, set forward to London.

The reader hath been already often informed of the jealous temper of this gentleman. He may likewise be pleased to remember the suspicion which he had conceived of Jones at Upton, upon his finding him in the room with Mrs. Waters; and though sufficient reasons had afterwards appeared entirely to clear up that suspicion; yet, now the reading so handsome a character of Mr. Jones, from his wife, caused him to reflect, that she likewise was in the inn at the same time; and jumbled together such a confusion of circumstances, in a head which was naturally none of the clearest, that the whole produced that green-eyed monster, mentioned by Shakespeare in his tragedy of Othello.

And now, as he was enquiring in the street after his wife, and had just received directions to the door, unfortunately Mr. Jones was issuing from it.

Fitzpatrick did not yet recollect the
3 I face

face of Jones; however, seeing a young well-dressed fellow coming from his wife, he made directly up to him, and asked him what he had been doing in that house: 'For I am sure,' said he, 'you must have been in it, as I saw you come out of it.'

Jones answered very modestly, that he had been visiting a lady there. To which Fitzpatrick replied, 'What business have you with the lady?' Upon which Jones, who now perfectly remembered the voice, features, and, indeed, coat of the gentleman, cried out, 'Ha! my good friend; give me your hand; I hope there is no ill blood remaining between us, upon a small mistake which happened so long ago.'

'Upon my soul, Sir,' said Fitzpatrick, 'I don't know your name, nor your face.'—'Indeed, Sir,' said Jones, 'neither have I the pleasure of knowing your name; but your face I very well remember to have seen before, at Upton, where a foolish quarrel happened between us, which, if it is not made up yet, we will now make up over a bottle.'

'At Upton!' cried the other. 'Ha! upon my soul, I believe your name is Jones.'—'Indeed,' answered he, 'it is.'—'O, upon my soul,' cries Fitzpatrick, 'you are the very man I wanted to meet. Upon my soul, I will drink a bottle with you presently; but first I will give you a great knock over the pate. There is for you, you rascal. Upon my soul, if you do not give me satisfaction for that blow, I will give you another.' And then drawing his sword, puts himself in a posture of defence, which was the only science he understood.

Jones was a little staggered by the blow, which came somewhat unexpectedly; but presently recovering himself, he also drew, and though he understood nothing of fencing, pressed on so boldly upon Fitzpatrick, that he beat down his guard, and sheathed one half of his sword in the body of the said gentleman, who had no sooner received it, than he slept backwards, dropt the point of his sword, and leaning upon it, cried, 'I have satisfaction enough: I am a dead man.'

'I hope not,' cries Jones; 'but whatever be the consequence, you must be sensible you have drawn it

'upon yourself.' At this instant, a number of fellows rushed in and seized Jones; who told them, he should make no resistance, and begged some of them at least would take care of the wounded gentleman.

'Ay,' cries one of the fellows, 'the wounded gentleman will be taken care enough of; for, I suppose, he hath not many hours to live. As for you, Sir, you have a month at least good yet.'—'D—n me, Jack,' said another, 'he hath prevented his voyage; he's bound to another port now;' and many other such jests were our poor Jones made the subject of, by these fellows, who were, indeed, the gang employed by Lord Fellamar, and had dogged him into the house of Mrs. Fitzpatrick, waiting for him at the corner of the street, when this unfortunate accident happened.

The officer who commanded this gang, very wisely concluded, that his business was now to deliver his prisoner into the hands of the civil magistrate. He ordered him, therefore, to be carried to a publick house, where, having sent for a constable, he delivered him to his custody.

The constable seeing Mr. Jones very well dressed, and hearing that the accident had happened in a duel, treated his prisoner with great civility; and, at his request, dispatched a messenger to enquire after the wounded gentleman, who was now at a tavern, under the surgeon's hands. The report brought back was, that the wound was certainly mortal, and there were no hopes of life. Upon which the constable informed Jones, that he must go before a justice. He answered, 'Wherever you please: I am indifferent as to what happens to me; for, though I am convinced I am not guilty of murder in the eye of the law, yet, the weight of blood I find intolerable upon my mind.'

Jones was now conducted before the justice, where the surgeon who dressed Mr. Fitzpatrick appeared, and deposed, that he believed the wound to be mortal; upon which the prisoner was committed to the Gate-house. It was very late at night, so that Jones would not send for Partridge till the next morning; and as he never shut his eyes till seven, so it was near twelve before the poor fellow, who was great-ly

ly frightened at not hearing from his master so long, received a message which almost deprived him of his being, when he heard it.

He went to the Gate-house, with trembling knees and a beating heart; and was no sooner arrived in the presence of Jones, than he lamented the misfortune that had befallen him, with many tears, looking all the while frequently about him in great terror; for as the news now arrived that Mr. Fitzpatrick was dead, the poor fellow apprehended every minute, that his ghost would enter the room. At last he delivered him a letter, which he had like to have forgot, and which came from Sophia by the hands of Black George.

Jones presently dispatched every one out of the room, and having eagerly broke open the letter, read as follows:

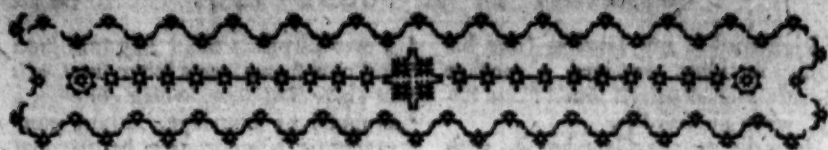
‘**Y**OU owe the hearing from me again to an accident, which

‘ I own surprizes me. My aunt hath
‘ just now shewn me a letter from you
‘ to Lady Bellaſton, which contains a
‘ propoſal of marriage. I am con-
‘ vinced it is your own hand; and
‘ what more surprizes me, is, that it
‘ is dated at the very time when you
‘ would have me imagine you was
‘ under ſuch concern on my account.
‘ I leave you to comment on this fact.
‘ All I deſire, is, that your name may
‘ never more be mentioned to

‘ S. W.’

Of the preſent ſituation of Mr. Jones’s mind, and of the pangs with which he was now tormented, we cannot give the reader a better idea, than by ſaying, his miſery was ſuch, that even Thwackum would almoſt have pitied him: but bad as it is, we ſhall at preſent leave him in it, as his good genius (if he really had any) ſeems to have done. And here we put an end to the ſixteenth book of our hiſtory.

END OF THE SIXTEENTH BOOK.



THE
H I S T O R Y
OF A
F O U N D L I N G.

BOOK XVII.

CONTAINING THREE DAYS.

CHAP. I.

CONTAINING A PORTION OF INTRODUCTORY WRITING.



WHEN a comick writer hath made his principal characters as happy as he can; or, when a tragick writer hath brought them to the highest pitch of human misery, they both conclude their business to be done, and that their work is come to a period.

Had we been of the tragick complexion, the reader must allow we were now very nearly arrived at this period; since it would be difficult for the devil, or any of his representatives on earth, to have contrived much greater torments for poor Jones, than those in which we left him in the last chapter: and, as for Sophia, a good-natured woman would hardly wish more uneasiness to a rival, than what she must at present be supposed to feel. What then remains to compleat the tragedy, but a murder or two, and a few moral sentences?

But to bring our favourites out of their present anguish and distress, and to land them at last on the shore of happiness, seems a much harder task; a task, indeed, so hard, that we do not undertake to execute it. In regard to Sophia, it is more than probable, that we shall, somewhere or other, provide a good husband for her in the end; either Blifil, or my lord, or somebody else: but as to poor Jones, such are the calamities in which he is at present involved, owing to his imprudence, by which if a man doth not become a felon to the world, he is at least a *felo de se*; so destitute is he now of friends, and so persecuted by enemies, that we almost despair of bringing him to any good; and if our reader delights in seeing executions, I think he ought not to lose any time in taking a first row at Tyburn.

This I faithfully promise, that notwithstanding any affection which we may be supposed to have for this rogue, whom we have unfortunately made our hero, we will lend him none of that supernatural assistance with which we are entrusted, upon condition that we use it only on very important occasions.

sions. If he doth not, therefore, find some natural means of fairly extricating himself from all his distresses, we will do no violence to the truth and dignity of history for his sake; for we had rather relate that he was hanged at Tyburn (which may very probably be the case) than forfeit our integrity, or shock the faith of our reader.

In this, the ancients had a great advantage over the moderns. Their mythology, which was at that time more firmly believed by the vulgar than any religion is at present, gave them always an opportunity of delivering a favourite hero. Their deities were always ready at the writer's elbow, to execute any of his purposes; and the more extraordinary the invention was, the greater was the surprize and delight of the credulous reader. Those writers could, with greater ease, have conveyed a friend from one country to another, nay, from one world to another, and have brought him back again, than a poor circumscribed modern can deliver him from a gaol.

The Arabians and Persians had an equal advantage in writing their tales from the Genii and Fairies, which they believe in as an article of their faith, upon the authority of the Koran itself. But we have none of these helps. To natural means alone we are confined; let us try, therefore, what by these means may be done for poor Jones: though, to confess the truth, something whispers me in the ear, that he doth not yet know the worst of his fortune; and that a more shocking piece of news than any he hath yet heard, remains for him in the unopened leaves of fate.

CHAP. II.

THE GENEROUS AND GRATEFUL BEHAVIOUR OF MRS. MILLER.

MR. Allworthy and Mrs. Miller were just sat down to breakfast, when Blifil, who had gone out very early that morning, returned to make one of the company.

He had not been long seated, before he began as follows. 'Good Lord! my dear uncle, what do you think hath happened? I vow I am afraid of telling it you, for fear of shock-

ing you with the remembrance of ever having shewn any kindness to such a villain.'—'What is the matter, child?' said the uncle; 'I fear I have shewn kindness in my life to the unworthy more than once. But Charity doth not adopt the vices of it's objects.'—'O! Sir,' returned Blifil, 'it is not without the secret direction of Providence that you mention the word adoption. Your adopted son, Sir, that Jones, that wretch whom you nourished in your bosom, hath proved one of the greatest villains upon earth.'—'By all that's sacred, 'tis false!' cries Mrs. Miller. 'Mr. Jones is no villain. He is one of the worthiest creatures breathing; and if any other person had called him villain, I would have thrown all this boiling water in his face!' Mr. Allworthy looked very much amazed at this behaviour. But she did not give him leave to speak, before turning to him she cried, 'I hope you will not be angry with me; I would not offend you, Sir, for the world! but, indeed, I could not bear to hear him called so.'—'I must own, Madam,' said Allworthy, very gravely, 'I am a little surprized to hear you so warmly defend a fellow you do not know.'—'O, I do know him, Mr. Allworthy,' said she; 'indeed I do; I should be the most ungrateful of all wretches if I denied it. O, he hath preserved me and my little family; we have all reason to bless him while we live. And I pray Heaven to bless him, and turn the hearts of his malicious enemies. I know, I find, I see he hath such!'—'You surprize me, Madam, still more,' said Allworthy, 'sure you must mean some other. It is impossible you should have any such obligations to the man my nephew mentions.'—'Too surely,' answered she, 'I have obligations to him of the greatest and tenderest kind. He hath been the preserver of me and mine. Believe me, Sir, he hath been abused, grossly abused to you; I know he hath; or you, whom I know to be all goodness and honour, would not, after the many kind and tender things I have heard you say of this poor helpless child, have so disdainfully called him fellow! Indeed, my best of friends, he deserves a kinder appellation from you, had you heard
the

‘the good, the kind, the grateful things which I have heard him utter of you. He never mentions your name but with a sort of adoration. In this very room I have seen him on his knees imploring all the blessings of Heaven upon your head. I do not love that child there better than he loves you.’

‘I see, Sir, now,’ said Blifil, with one of those grinning sneers, with which the devil marks his best beloved, ‘Mrs. Miller really doth know him. I suppose you will find she is not the only one of your acquaintance to whom he hath exposed you. As for my character, I perceive, by some hints she hath thrown out, he hath been very free with it, but I forgive him.’—‘And the Lord forgive you, Sir!’ says Mrs. Miller; ‘we have all sins enough to stand in need of his forgiveness.’

‘Upon my word, Mrs. Miller,’ said Allworthy, ‘I do not take this behaviour of yours, to my nephew, kindly; and I do assure you, as any reflections which you cast upon him, must come only from that wickedest of men, they would only serve, if that were possible, to heighten my resentment against him: for I must tell you, Mrs. Miller, the young man who now stands before you, hath ever been the warmest advocate for the ungrateful wretch, whose cause you espouse. This, I think, when you hear it from my mouth, will make you wonder at so much baseness and ingratitude.’

‘You are deceived, Sir,’ answered Mrs. Miller; ‘if they were the last words which were to issue from my lips, I would say you were deceived; and I once more repeat it, the Lord forgive those who have deceived you! I do not pretend to say the young man is without faults; but they are the faults of wildness and of youth; faults which he may, nay, which I am certain he will relinquish, and if he should not, they are vastly overbalanced by one of the most humane, tender, honest hearts, that ever man was blessed with.’

‘Indeed, Mrs. Miller,’ said Allworthy, ‘had this been related of you, I should not have believed it.’—‘Indeed, Sir,’ answered she, ‘you will believe every thing I have said, I am sure you will; and when you

‘have heard the story which I shall tell you (for I will tell you all) you will be so far from being offended, that you will own (I know your justice so well) that I must have been the most despicable and most ungrateful of wretches, if I had acted any other part than I have.’

‘Well, Madam,’ said Allworthy, ‘I shall be very glad to hear any good excuse for a behaviour which, I must confess, I think wants an excuse. And now, Madam, will you be pleased to let my nephew proceed in his story without interruption? He would not have introduced a matter of slight consequence, with such a preface. Perhaps, even this story will cure you of your mistake.’

Mrs. Miller gave tokens of submission, and then Mr. Blifil began thus: ‘I am sure, Sir, if you don’t think proper to resent the ill usage of Mrs. Miller, I shall easily forgive what affects me only. I think your goodness hath not deserved this indignity at her hands.’—‘Well, child,’ said Allworthy, ‘but what is this new instance? What hath he done of late?’—‘What,’ cries Blifil, ‘notwithstanding all Mrs. Miller hath said, I am very sorry to relate, and what you should never have heard from me, had it not been a matter impossible to conceal from the whole world. In short, he hath killed a man; I will not say murdered—for, perhaps, it may not be so construed in law, and I hope the best for his sake.’

Allworthy looked shocked, and blessed himself; and then turning to Mrs. Miller, he cried, ‘Well, Madam, what say you now?’

‘Why, I say, Sir,’ answered she, ‘that I never was more concerned at any thing in my life; but, if the fact be true, I am convinced the man, whoever he is, was in fault. Heaven knows there are many villains in this town, who make it their business to provoke young gentlemen. Nothing but the greatest provocation could have tempted him; for of all the gentlemen I ever had in my house, I never saw one so gentle, or so sweet-tempered. He was beloved by every one in the house, and every one who came near it.’

While she was thus running on, a violent knocking at the door interrupted

rupted the conversation, and prevented her from proceeding farther, or from receiving any answer; for, as she concluded this was a visitor to Mr. Allworthy, she hastily retired, taking with her her little girl, whose eyes were all over blubbered at the melancholy news she heard of Jones, who used to call her his little wife; and not only gave her many playthings, but spent whole hours in playing with her himself.

Some readers may, perhaps, be pleased with these minute circumstances, in relating of which, we follow the example of Plutarch, one of the best of our brother historians; and others, to whom they may appear trivial, will, we hope, at least pardon them, as we are never prolix on such occasions.

CHAP. III.

THE ARRIVAL OF MR. WESTERN, WITH SOME MATTERS CONCERNING THE PATERNAL AUTHORITY.

MRS. Miller had not long left the room, when Mr. Western entered; but not before a small wrangling bout had passed between him and his chairmen; for the fellows who had taken up their burden at the Hercules Pillars, had conceived no hopes of having any future good customer in the squire; and they were moreover farther encouraged by his generosity, (for he had given them of his own accord sixpence more than their fare;) they, therefore, very boldly demanded another shilling, which so provoked the squire, that he not only bestowed many hearty curses on them at the door, but retained his anger after he came into the room; swearing that all the Londoners were like the court, and thought of nothing but plundering country gentlemen. "D—n me," says he, "if I won't walk in the rain, rather than get into one of their hand-barrows again! They have jolted me more in a mile, than Brown Bess would in a long fox chase."

When his wrath on this occasion was a little appeased, he resumed the same passionate tone on another. "There," says he, "there is fine business forwards now! The hounds

'have changed at last; and when we imagined we had a fox to deal with, 'od-rat-it, it turns out to be a badger at last.'

'Pray, my good neighbour,' said Allworthy, 'drop your metaphors, and speak a little plainer.'—'Why, then,' says the squire, 'to tell you plainly, we have been all this time afraid of a son of a whore of a bastard of somebody's, I don't know who's, not I—And now here is a confounded son of a whore of a lord, who may be a bastard too for what I know or care, for he shall never have a daughter of mine by my consent! They have beggared the nation; but they shall never beggar me. My land shall never be sent over to Hanover.'

'You surprize me much, my good friend,' said Allworthy. 'Why, zounds! I am surprized myself,' answered the squire, 'I went to see sister Western last night, according to her own appointment, and there I was a had into a whole roomful of women. There was my Lady Cousin Bellaston, and my Lady Betty, and my Lady Catharine, and my lady I don't know who; d—n me if ever you catch me among such a kennel of hoop-petticoat b—s! D—n me, I'd rather be run by my own dogs, as one *Adon* was; that the story-book says, was turned into a hare, and his own dogs killed un, and eat un! Od-rabbit-it, no mortal was ever run in such a manner; if I dodged one way, one had me; if I offered to clap back, another snapp'd me. "O certainly, one of the greatest matches in England!" says one cousin; [here he attempted to mimic them.] "A very advantageous offer indeed!" cries another cousin; (for you must know they be all my cousins, tho' I never zeed half oom before.) "Surely," says that fat a—se b—, my Lady Bellaston, "cousin, you must be out of your wits, to think of refusing such an offer!"'

'Now I begin to understand,' says Allworthy, 'some person hath made proposals to Miss Western, which the ladies of the family approve, but it is not to your liking.'

'My liking!' said Western; 'how the devil should it? I tell you, it is a lord;

‘lord; and those are always folks whom you know I always resolved to have nothing to do with. Did I not I refuse a matter of forty years purchase now for a bit of land, which one of ’em had a mind to put into a park, only because I would have no dealings with lords; and dost think I would marry my daughter zu? Besides, ben’t I engaged to you, and did I ever go off any bargain when I had promised?’

‘As to that point, neighbour,’ said Allworthy, ‘I entirely release you from any engagement. No contract can be binding between parties who have not a full power to make it at the time; nor ever afterwards acquire the power of fulfilling it.’

‘Slud! then,’ answered Western, ‘I tell you I have power, and I will fulfil it. Come along with me directly to Doctors Commons; I will get a licence, and will go to sister, and take away the wench by force; and she shall ha’ un, or I will lock her up, and keep her upon bread and water as long as she lives.’

‘Mr. Western,’ said Allworthy, ‘shall I beg you will hear my full sentiments on this matter?’—‘Hear thee I ay, to be sure, I will,’ answered he. ‘Why then, Sir,’ cries Allworthy, ‘I can truly say, without a compliment either to you or the young lady, that when this match was proposed, I embraced it very readily and heartily, from my regard to you both. An alliance between two families so nearly neighbours, and between whom there had always existed so mutual an intercourse and good harmony, I thought a most desirable event; and with regard to the young lady, not only the concurrent opinion of all who knew her, but my own observation assured me, that she would be an inestimable treasure to a good husband. I shall say nothing of her personal qualifications, which certainly are admirable; her good-nature, her charitable disposition, her modesty, are too well known to need any panegyrick: but she hath one quality which existed in a high degree in that best of women, who is now one of the first of angels, which, as it is not of a glaring kind, more commonly escapes observation; so little, indeed, it is remarked, that I

want a word to express it. I must use negatives on this occasion. I never heard any thing of pertness, or what is called repartee, out of her mouth; no pretence to wit, much less to that kind of wisdom, which is the result only of great learning and experience; the affectation of which, in a young woman, is as absurd as any of the affectations of an ape. No dictatorial sentiments, no judicial opinions, no profound criticisms. Whenever I have seen her in the company of men, she hath been all attention, with the modesty of a learner, not the forwardness of a teacher. You’ll pardon me for it, but I once, to try her only, desired her opinion on a point which was controverted between Mr. Thwackum and Mr. Square. To which she answered with much sweetness, “You will pardon me, good Mr. Allworthy; I am sure you cannot in earnest think me capable of deciding any point in which two such gentlemen disagree.” Thwackum and Square, who both alike thought themselves sure of a favourable decision, seconded my request. She answered with the same good humour, “I must absolutely be excused; for I will affront neither so much, as to give my judgment on his side.” Indeed, she always shewed the highest deference to the understandings of men; a quality absolutely essential to the making a good wife. I shall only add, that as she is most apparently void of all affectation, this diffidence must be certainly real.”

Here Bliss sighed bitterly; upon which, Western, whose eyes were full of tears at the praise of Sophy, blubbered out, ‘Don’t be chicken-hearted, for that ha’ hur; d—n me, that ha’ hur, if she was twenty times as good.’

‘Remember your promise, Sir,’ cried Allworthy, ‘I was not to be interrupted.’—‘Well, that unt,’ answered the squire; ‘I won’t speak another word.’

‘Now, my good friend,’ continued Allworthy, ‘I have dwelt so long on the merit of this young lady, partly as I really am in love with her character, and partly that fortune (for the match in that light is really advantageous on my nephew’s side)

‘might

might not be imagined to be my principal view in having so eagerly embraced the proposal. Indeed, I heartily wished to receive so great a jewel into my family; but though I may wish for many good things, I would not, therefore, steal them; or be guilty of any violence or injustice to possess myself of them. Now, to force a woman into a marriage contrary to her consent or approbation, is an act of such injustice and oppression, that I wish the laws of our country could restrain it; but a good conscience is never lawless in the worst-regulated state, and will provide those laws for itself, which the neglect of legislators hath forgotten to supply. This is surely a case of that kind; for is it not cruel, nay impious, to force a woman into that state against her will; for her behaviour in which she is to be accountable to the highest and most dreadful court of judicature, and to answer at the peril of her soul! To discharge the matrimonial duties in an adequate manner, is no easy task; and shall we lay this burden upon a woman, while we at the same time deprive her of all that assistance which may enable her to undergo it? Shall we tear her very heart from her, while we enjoin her duties to which a whole heart is scarce equal? I must speak very plainly here; I think parents who act in this manner are accessaries to all the guilt which their children afterwards incur; and of course must, before a Just Judge, expect to partake of their punishment: but if they could avoid this, good Heaven! is there a soul who can bear the thought of having contributed to the damnation of his child?

For these reasons, my best neighbour, as I see the inclinations of this young lady are most unhappily averse to my nephew, I must decline any farther thoughts of the honour you intended him, though I assure you, I shall always retain the most grateful sense of it.

Well, Sir, said Western, (the froth bursting forth from his lips the moment they were uncorked) 'you cannot say but I have heard you out, and now I expect you'll hear me; and if I don't answer every word on't, why then I'll consent to gee

the matter up. First, then, I desire you to answer me one question, Did not I beget her? Did not I beget her? answer me that. They say, indeed, it is a wise father that knows his own child; but I am sure I have the best title to her, for I bred her up. But I believe you will allow me to be her father; and if I be, am I not to govern my own child? I ask you that; am I not to govern my own child? And if I am to govern her in other matters, surely I am to govern her in this which concerns her most. And what am I desiring all this while? Am I desiring her to do any thing for me? To give me any thing? Zu much on t'other side, that I am only desiring her to take away half my estate now, and t'other half when I die. Well; and what is it all vor? Why is unt it to make her happy? It's enough to make one mad to hear folks talk; if I was going to marry myself, then she would ha' reason to cry and to blubber; but, on the contrary, han't I offered to bind down my land in such a manner, that I could not marry if I would, seeing as narro' woman upon earth would ha' me. What the devil in hell can I do more? I contribute to her damnation!—Zounds! I'd zee all the world d—d before her little finger should be hurt. Indeed, Mr. Allworthy, you must excuse me, but I am surprized to hear you talk in such a manner; and I must say, take it how you will, that I thought you had more sense.

Allworthy resented this reflexion only with a smile; nor could he, if he would have endeavoured it, have conveyed into that smile any mixture of malice or contempt. His smiles at folly were, indeed, such as we may suppose the angels bestow on the absurdities of mankind.

Bliss! now desired to be permitted to speak a few words. 'As to using any violence on the young lady, I am sure I shall never consent to it. My conscience will not permit me to use violence on any one, much less on a lady, for whom, however cruel she is to me, I shall always preserve the purest and sincerest affection; but yet I have read, that women are seldom proof against perseverance. Why may I not hope then, by such perse-

verance, at last to gain those inclinations, in which, for the future, I shall, perhaps, have no rival? for, as for this lord, Mr. Western is so kind to prefer me to him; and sure, Sir, you will not deny but that a parent has at least a negative voice in these matters; nay, I have heard this very young lady herself say so, more than once; and declare, that she thought children inexcusable, who married in direct opposition to the will of their parents. Besides, though the other ladies of the family seem to favour the pretensions of my lord, I do not find the lady herself is inclined to give him any countenance; alas! I am too well assured she is not; I am too sensible that wickedest of men remains uppermost in her heart.'

'Ay, ay, so he does,' cries Western. 'But surely,' says Blifil, 'when she hears of this murder which he hath committed, if the law should spare his life—'

'What's that?' cries Western, 'murder! hath he committed a murder, and is there any hopes of seeing him hanged?—Tol de rol, tol lol de rol.' Here he fell a singing and capering about the room.

'Child,' says Allworthy, 'this unhappy passion of yours distresses me beyond measure. I heartily pity you, and would do every fair thing to promote your success.'

I desire no more,' cries Blifil; 'I am convinced my dear uncle hath a better opinion of me, than to think that I myself would accept of more.'

'Look'e,' says Allworthy, 'you have my leave to write, to visit, if she will permit it—but I insist on no thoughts of violence. I will have no confinement, nothing of that kind attempted.'

'Well, well,' cries the squire, 'nothing of that kind shall be attempted; we will try a little longer what fair means will effect; and if this fellow be but hanged out of the way, tol lol de rol!—I never heard better news in my life; I warrant every thing goes to my mind.—Do, pr'ythee, dear Allworthy, come and dine with me at the Hercules Pillars: I have bespoken a shoulder of mutton roasted, and a spare-rib of pork, and a fowl and egg-sauce. There will

be nobody but ourselves, unless we have a mind to have the landlord; for I have sent Parson Supple down to Basingstoke after my tobacco-box, which I left at an inn there, and I would not lose it for the world; for it is an old acquaintance of above twenty years standing. I can tell you landlord is a vast comical bitch; you will like 'un hugely.'

Mr. Allworthy at last agreed to this invitation; and soon after, the squire went off, singing and capering at the hopes of seeing the speedy, tragical end of poor Jones.

When he was gone, Mr. Allworthy resumed the aforesaid subject with much gravity. He told his nephew, he wished with all his heart he would endeavour to conquer a passion, 'In which I cannot,' says he, 'flatter you with any hopes of succeeding. It is certainly a vulgar error, that aversion in a woman may be conquered by perseverance. Indifference may, perhaps, sometimes yield to it; but the usual triumphs gained by perseverance in a lover, are over caprice, prudence, affectation, and often an exorbitant degree of levity, which excites women, not over-warm in their constitutions, to indulge their vanity by prolonging the time of courtship, even when they are well enough pleased with the object, and resolve (if they ever resolve at all) to make him a very pitiful amends in the end. But a fixed dislike, as I am afraid this is, will rather gather strength, than be conquered by time. Besides, my dear, I have another apprehension, which you must excuse. I am afraid this passion, which you have for this fine young creature, hath her beautiful person too much for it's object, and is unworthy of the name of that love, which is the only foundation of matrimonial felicity. To admire, to like, and to long for the possession of a beautiful woman, without any regard to her sentiments towards us, is, I am afraid, too natural: but love, I believe, is the child of love only; at least, I am pretty confident, that to love the creature who we are assured hates us, is not in human nature. Examine your heart therefore, thoroughly, my good boy, and if, upon examination, you have but the least suspicion

“Suspicion of this kind, I am sure your own virtue and religion will impel you to drive so vicious a passion from your heart; and your good sense will soon enable you to do it without pain.”

The reader may pretty well guess Blifil's answer; but if he should be at a loss, we are not, at present, at leisure to satisfy him; as our history now hastens on to matters of higher importance, and we can no longer bear to be absent from Sophia.

CHAP. IV.

AN EXTRAORDINARY SCENE BETWEEN SOPHIA AND HER AUNT.

THE lowing heifer, and the bleating ewe, in herds and flocks, may ramble safe and unregarded through the pastures. These are, indeed, hereafter doomed to be the prey of man; yet many years are they suffered to enjoy their liberty undisturbed: but if a plump doe be discovered to have escaped from the forest, and to repose herself in some field or grove, the whole parish is presently alarmed, every man is ready to set his dogs after her; and if she is preserved from the rest by the good squire, it is only that he may secure her for his own eating.

I have often considered a very fine young woman of fortune and fashion, when first found strayed from the pale of her nursery, to be in pretty much the same situation with this doe. The town is immediately in an uproar, she is hunted from park to play, from court to assembly, from assembly to her own chamber, and rarely escapes a single season from the jaws of some devourer or other: for, if her friends protect her from some, it is only to deliver her over to one of their own chusing, often more disagreeable to her than any of the rest; while whole herds or flocks of other women securely, and scarce regarded, traverse the park, the play, the opera, and the assembly; and tho', for the most part at least, they are at last devoured, yet for a long time do they wanton in liberty, without disturbance or controul.

Of all these paragons, none ever tasted more of this persecution than

poor Sophia. Her ill stars were not contented with all that she had suffered on account of Blifil; they now raised her another pursuer, who seemed likely to torment her no less than the other had done: for though her aunt was less violent, she was no less assiduous in teasing her, than her father had been before.

The servants were no sooner departed after dinner, than Mrs. Western, who had opened the matter to Sophia, informed her, that she expected his lordship that very afternoon, and intended to take the first opportunity of leaving her alone with him.

“If you do, Madam,” answered Sophia, with some spirit, “I shall take the first opportunity of leaving him by himself.”

—“How, Madam!” cries the aunt; “is this the return you make me for my kindness, in relieving you from your confinement at your father's?”

—“You know, Madam,” says Sophia, “the cause of that confinement

was a refusal to comply with my father, in accepting a man I detested; and will my dear aunt, who hath relieved me from that distress, involve me in another equally bad?”

—“And do you think then, Madam,” answered Mrs. Western, “that there is

no difference between my Lord Fel-lamar and Mr. Blifil?”

—“Very little in my opinion,” cries Sophia; “and if I must be condemned to one,

I would certainly have the merit of sacrificing myself to my father's

pleasure.” —“Then my pleasure, I find,” said the aunt, “hath very little weight with you! but that con-

sideration shall not move me. I act from nobler motives. The view of

aggrandizing my family, of ennobling yourself, is what I proceed up-

on. Have you no sense of ambition?

—“Are there no charms in the thoughts of having a coronet on your coach?”

—“None, upon my honour,” said Sophia. “A pincushion upon my coach

would please me just as well.” —“Never mention honour,” cries the aunt,

“It becomes not the mouth of such a wretch. I am sorry, niece, you

force me to use these words; but I cannot bear your groveling temper;

you have none of the blood of the Westerns in you! But, however mean and base your own ideas are,

‘you shall bring no imputation on mine. I will never suffer the world to say of me, that I encouraged you in refusing one of the best matches in England; a match, which, besides its advantage in fortune, would do honour to almost any family, and hath indeed, in title, the advantage of ours.’—‘Surely,’ says Sophia, ‘I am born deficient; and have not the senses with which other people are blessed: there must be certainly some sense which can relish the delights of sound and show, which I have not: for surely mankind would not labour so much, nor sacrifice so much for the obtaining, nor would they be so elate and proud with possessing, what appeared to them, as it doth to me, the most insignificant of all trifles.’

‘No, no, Miss,’ cries the aunt; ‘you are born with as many senses as other people; but, I assure you, you are not born with a sufficient understanding to make a fool of me, or to expose my conduct to the world. So I declare this to you upon my word, and you know, I believe, how fixed my resolutions are, unless you agree to see his lordship this afternoon, I will, with my own hands, deliver you to-morrow morning to my brother, and will never henceforth interfere with you, nor see your face again.’ Sophia stood a few moments silent after this speech, which was uttered in a most angry and peremptory tone; and then bursting into tears, she cried, ‘Do with me, Madam, whatever you please; I am the most miserable, undone wretch upon earth; if my dear aunt forsakes me, where shall I look for a protector?’—‘My dear niece,’ cries she, ‘you will have a very good protector in his lordship; a protector, whom nothing but a hankering after that vile fellow Jones can make you decline.’—‘Indeed, Madam,’ said Sophia, ‘you wrong me. How can you imagine, after what you have shewn me, if I had ever any such thoughts, that I should not banish them for ever? If it will satisfy you, I will receive the sacrament upon it, never to see his face again.’—‘But child, dear child,’ said the aunt, ‘be reasonable: can you invent a single objection?’—‘I have already, I think, told you a

sufficient objection,’ answered Sophia. ‘What!’ cries the aunt; ‘I remember none.’—‘Sure, Madam,’ said Sophia, ‘I told you he had used me in the rudest and vilest manner!’—‘Indeed, child,’ answered she, ‘I never heard you, or did not understand you: but what do you mean by this rude and vile manner?’—‘Indeed, Madam,’ said Sophia, ‘I am almost ashamed to tell you. He caught me in his arms, pulled me down upon the settee, and thrust his hand into my bosom, and kissed it with such violence, that I have the mark upon my left breast at this moment.’—‘Indeed!’ said Mrs. Western. ‘Yes, indeed, Madam,’ answered Sophia; ‘my father luckily came in at that instant, or Heaven knows what rudeness he intended to have proceeded to.’—‘I am astonished and confounded,’ cries the aunt. ‘No woman of the name of Western hath been ever treated so, since we were a family. I would have torn the eyes of a prince out, if he had attempted such freedoms with me. It is impossible! sure, Sophia, you must invent this to raise my indignation against him.’—‘I hope, Madam,’ said Sophia, ‘you have too good an opinion of me, to imagine me capable of telling an untruth. Upon my soul, it is true.’—‘I should have stabbed him to the heart, had I been present,’ returned the aunt. ‘Yet, surely, he could have no dishonourable design: it is impossible! he durst not: besides, his proposals shew he had not; for they are not only honourable, but generous. I don’t know; the age allows too great freedoms. A distant salute is all I would have allowed before the ceremony. I have had lovers formerly, not so long ago neither; several lovers, though I never would consent to marriage, and I never encouraged the least freedom. It is a foolish custom, and what I never would agree to. No man kissed more of me than my cheek. It is as much as one can bring one’s self to give lips up to a husband; and, indeed, could I ever have been persuaded to marry, I believe I should not have soon been brought to endure so much.’—‘You will pardon me, dear Madam,’ said Sophia, ‘if I make one observation: you

‘you own you have had many lovers, and the world knows it, even if you should deny it.’ You refused them all, and I am convinced one coronet at least among them.—‘You say true, dear Sophia,’ answered she; ‘I had once the offer of a title.’—‘Why then,’ said Sophia, ‘will you not suffer me to refuse this once?’—‘It is true, child,’ said she, ‘I have refused the offer of a title; but it was not so good an offer; that is, not so very, very good an offer.’—‘Yes, Madam,’ said Sophia; ‘but you have had very great proposals from men of vast fortunes. It was not the first, nor the second, nor the third advantageous match that offered itself.’—‘I own it was not,’ said she. ‘Well, Madam,’ continued Sophia, ‘and why may not I expect to have a second, perhaps, better than this?’—‘You are now but a young woman, and I am convinced would not promise to yield to the first lover of fortune, nay, or of title too. I am a very young woman, and sure I need not despair.’—‘Well, my dear, dear Sophia,’ cries the aunt, ‘what would you have me say?’—‘Why, I only beg, that I may not be left alone, at least this evening: grant me that, and I will submit, if you think, after what hath passed, I ought to see him in your company.’—‘Well, I will grant it,’ cries the aunt. ‘Sophy, you know I love you, and can deny you nothing. You know the easiness of my nature; I have not always been so easy. I have been formerly thought cruel; by the men I mean. I was called the cruel Parthenissa. I have broke many a window that has had verses to the cruel Parthenissa in it. Sophy, I was never so handsome as you, and yet I had something of you formerly. I am a little altered. Kingdoms and states, as Tully Cicero says in his epistles, undergo alteration, and so must the human form.’ Thus run she on for near half an hour upon herself, and her conquests, and her cruelty, till the arrival of my lord; who, after a most tedious visit, during which Mrs. Western never once offered to leave the room, retired, not much more satisfied with the aunt than with the niece: for Sophia had brought her aunt into so excellent a temper,

that she consented to almost every thing her niece said; and agreed, that a little distant behaviour might not be improper to so forward a lover.

Thus Sophia, by a little well-directed flattery, for which, surely none will blame her, obtained a little ease for herself, and at least put off the evil day: and, now we have seen our heroine in a better situation than she hath been for a long time before, we will look a little after Mr. Jones, whom we left in the most deplorable situation that can well be imagined,

CHAP. V.

MRS. MILLER AND MR. NIGHTINGALE VISIT JONES IN THE PRISON.

WHEN Mr. Allworthy and his nephew went to meet Mr. Western, Mrs. Miller set forward to her son-in-law’s lodgings, in order to acquaint him with the accident which had befallen his friend Jones; but he had known it long before from Partridge, (for Jones, when he left Mrs. Miller, had been furnished with a room in the same house with Mr. Nightingale.) The good woman found her daughter under great affliction, on account of Mr. Jones, whom having comforted as well as she could, she set forward to the Gate-house, where she heard he was, and where Mr. Nightingale was arrived before her.

The firmness and constancy of a true friend, is a circumstance so extremely delightful to persons in any kind of distress, that the distress itself, if it be only temporary, and admits of relief, is more than compensated by bringing this comfort with it: nor are instances of this kind so rare, as some superficial and inaccurate observers have reported. To say the truth, want of compassion is not to be numbered among our general faults. The black ingredient which fouls our disposition, is envy. Hence our eye is seldom, I am afraid, turned upwards to those who are manifestly greater, better, wiser, or happier than ourselves, without some degree of malignity; while we commonly look downwards on the mean and miserable, with sufficient benevolence and pity. In fact, I have remarked, that most of the

the defects which have discovered themselves in the friendships within my observation, have arisen from envy only; a hellish vice; and yet, one from which I have known very few absolutely exempt. But enough of a subject which, if pursued, would lead me too far.

Whether it was, that Fortune was apprehensive lest Jones should sink under the weight of his adversity, and that she might thus lose any future opportunity of tormenting him; or whether she really abated somewhat of her severity towards him, she seemed a little to relax her persecution, by sending him the company of two such faithful friends, and what is, perhaps, more rare, a faithful servant. For Partridge, though he had many imperfections, wanted not fidelity; and though fear would not suffer him to be hanged for his master, yet the world, I believe, could not have bribed him to desert his cause.

While Jones was expressing great satisfaction in the presence of his friends, Partridge brought an account, that Mr. Fitzpatrick was still alive, though the surgeon declared that he had very little hopes. Upon which Jones fetching a deep sigh, Nightingale said to him, 'My dear Tom, why should you afflict yourself so upon an accident, which, whatever be the consequence, can be attended with no danger to you; and in which your conscience cannot accuse you of having been in the least to blame? If the fellow should die, what have you done more than taken away the life of a ruffian in your own defence? So will the coroner's inquest certainly find it; and then you will be easily admitted to bail: and though you must undergo the form of a trial, yet it is a trial which many men would stand for you for a shilling.'—'Come, come, Mr. Jones,' said Mrs. Miller, 'cheer yourself up. I knew you could not be the aggressor, and so I told Mr. Allworthy, and so he shall acknowledge too, before I have done with him.'

Jones gravely answered, that whatever might be his fate, he should always lament the having shed the blood of one of his fellow-creatures, as one of the highest misfortunes which could have befallen him. 'But I have another misfortune, of the tenderest

kind.—O! Mrs. Miller, I have lost what I held most dear upon earth.'—'That must be a mistress,' said Mrs. Miller: 'but come, come; I know more than you imagine;' (for, indeed, Partridge had blabbed all;) 'and I have heard more than you know. Matters go better, I promise you, than you think; and I would not give Bliffl sixpence for all the chance which he hath of the lady.'

'Indeed, my dear friend, indeed,' answered Jones, 'you are an entire stranger to the cause of my grief. If you was acquainted with the story, you would allow my case admitted of no comfort. I apprehend no danger from Bliffl. I have undone myself!'—'Don't despair,' replied Mrs. Miller; 'you know not what a woman can do; and if any thing be in my power, I promise you I will do it to serve you. It is my duty. My son, my dear Mr. Nightingale, who is so kind to tell me he hath obligations to you on the same account, knows it is my duty. Shall I go to the lady myself? I will say any thing to her you would have me say.'

'Thou best of women,' cries Jones, taking her by the hand, 'talk not of obligations to me; but, as you have been so kind to mention it, there is a favour which, perhaps, may be in your power. I see you are acquainted with the lady (how you came by your information, I know not) who sits, indeed, very near my heart. If you could contrive to deliver this, (giving her a paper from his pocket) I shall for ever acknowledge your goodness.'

'Give it me,' said Mrs. Miller. 'If I see it not in her own possession before I sleep, may my next sleep be my last. Comfort yourself, my good young man; be wise enough to take warning from past follies, and I warrant all shall be well, and I shall yet see you happy with the most charming young lady in the world; for so I hear from every one she is.'

'Believe me, Madam,' said he, 'I do not speak the common cant of one in my unhappy situation. Before this dreadful accident happened, I had resolved to quit a life, of which I was become sensible of the wickedness, as well as folly. I do assure you, notwithstanding the disturbances
I have

* I have unfortunately occasioned in your house, for which I heartily ask your pardon, I am not an abandoned prodigal. Though I have been hurried into vices, I do not approve a vicious character; nor will I ever, from this moment, deserve it.'

Mrs. Miller expressed great satisfaction in these declarations, in the sincerity of which she averred she had an entire faith; and now the remainder of the conversation passed in the joint attempts of that good woman and Mr. Nightingale, to cheer the dejected spirits of Mr. Jones, in which they so far succeeded, as to leave him much better comforted and satisfied than they found him; to which happy alteration, nothing so much contributed, as the kind undertaking of Mrs. Miller, to deliver his letter to Sophia, which he despaired of finding any means to accomplish: for when Black George produced the list from Sophia, he informed Partridge, that she had strictly charged him, on pain of having it communicated to her father, not to bring her any answer. He was moreover not a little pleased, to find he had so warm an advocate to Mr. Allworthy himself, in this good woman, who was, in reality, one of the worthiest creatures in the world.

After about an hour's visit from the lady, (for Nightingale had been with him much longer) they both took their leave, promising to return to him soon; during which, Mrs. Miller said, she hoped to bring him some good news from his mistress; and Mr. Nightingale promised to enquire into the state of Mr. Fitzpatrick's wound, and likewise to find out some of the persons who were present at the rencounter.

The former of these went directly in quest of Sophia, whither we likewise shall now attend her.

CHAP. VI.

IN WHICH MRS. MILLER PAYS A VISIT TO SOPHIA.

ACCESS to the young lady was by no means difficult; for as she lived now on a perfect friendly footing with her aunt, she was at full liberty to receive what visitants she pleased.

Sophia was dressing, when she was

acquainted that there was a gentlewoman below to wait on her: as she was neither afraid nor ashamed to see any of her own sex, Mrs. Miller was immediately admitted.

Curtseys, and the usual ceremonials between women who are strangers to each other, being past, Sophia said, 'I have not the pleasure to know you, Madam.'—'No, Madam,' answered Mrs. Miller, 'and I must beg pardon for intruding upon you. But when you know what has induced me to give you this trouble, I hope—' 'Pray, what is your business, Madam?' said Sophia, with a little emotion. 'Madam, we are not alone,' replied Mrs. Miller, in a low voice. 'Go out, Betty,' said Sophia.

When Betty was departed, Mrs. Miller said, 'I was desired, Madam, by a very unhappy young gentleman, to deliver you this letter.' Sophia changed colour when she saw the direction, well knowing the hand; and, after some hesitation, said, 'I could not conceive, Madam, from your appearance, that your business had been of such a nature.—Whomever you brought this letter from, I shall not open it. I should be sorry to entertain an unjust suspicion of any one; but you are an utter stranger to me.' 'If you will have patience, Madam,' answered Mrs. Miller, 'I will acquaint you who I am, and how I came by that letter.'—'I have no curiosity, Madam, to know anything,' cries Sophia; 'but I must insist on your delivering that letter back to the person who gave it you.'

Mrs. Miller then fell upon her knees, and, in the most passionate terms, implored her compassion: to which Sophia answered; 'Sure, Madam, it is surprising you should be so very strongly interested in the behalf of this person. I would not think, Madam—' 'No, Madam,' says Mrs. Miller, 'you shall not think any thing but the truth. I will tell you all, and you will not wonder that I am interested. He is the best-natured creature that ever was born.'—She then began and related the story of Mr. Henderson—After this she cried, 'This, Madam, this is his goodness; but I have much more tender obligations to him. He hath preserved my child.'—Here, after shedding some tears, she related every

every thing concerning that fact, suppressing only those circumstances which would have most reflected on her daughter, and concluded with saying, 'Now, Madam, you shall judge whether I can ever do enough for so kind, so good, so generous a young man; and sure he is the best and worthiest of all human beings.'

The alterations in the countenance of Sophia had hitherto been chiefly to her disadvantage, and had inclined her complexion to too great paleness; but she now waxed redder, if possible, than vermilion, and cried, 'I know not what to say; certainly what arises from gratitude cannot be blamed. But what service can my reading this letter do your friend, since I am resolved never—' Mrs. Miller fell again to her entreaties, and begged to be forgiven; but she could not, she said, carry it back. 'Well, Madam,' says Sophia, 'I cannot help it, if you will force it upon me.—Certainly you may leave it, whether I will or no.' What Sophia meant, or whether she meant any thing, I will not presume to determine; but Mrs. Miller actually understood this as a hint; and presently laying the letter down on the table, took her leave; having first begged permission to wait again on Sophia, which request had neither assent nor denial.

The letter lay upon the table no longer than till Mrs. Miller was out of sight; for then Sophia opened and read it.

This letter did very little service to his cause; for it consisted of little more than confessions of his own unworthiness, and bitter lamentations of despair, together with the most solemn protestations of his unalterable fidelity to Sophia, of which, he said, he hoped to convince her, if he had ever more the honour of being admitted to her presence; and that he could account for the letter to Lady Bellafton in such a manner, that though it would not entitle him to her forgiveness, he hoped at least to obtain it from her mercy. And concluded with vowing, that nothing was ever less in his thoughts than to marry Lady Bellafton.

Though Sophia read the letter twice over with great attention, his meaning still remained a riddle to her; nor

could her invention suggest to her any means to excuse Jones. She certainly remained very angry with him; though, indeed, Lady Bellafton took up so much of her resentment, that her gentle mind had but little left to bestow on any other person.

That lady was, most unluckily, to dine this very day with her aunt Western; and in the afternoon, they were all three, by appointment, to go together to the opera, and thence to Lady Thomas Hatchet's drum. Sophia would have gladly been excused from all, but she would not disoblige her aunt: and as to the arts of counterfeiting illness, she was so entirely a stranger to them, that it never once entered into her head. When she was dressed, therefore, down she went, resolved to encounter all the horrors of the day; and a most disagreeable one it proved; for Lady Bellafton took every opportunity very civilly and slyly to insult her; to all which, her dejection of spirits disabled her from making any return; and, indeed, to confess the truth, she was at the very best but an indifferent mistress of repartee.

Another misfortune which befel poor Sophia, was the company of Lord Fellamar, whom she met at the opera, and who attended her to the drum. And though both places were too publick to admit of any particularities, and she was farther relieved by the musick at the one place, and by the cards at the other, she could not, however, enjoy herself in his company: for there is something of delicacy in women, which will not suffer them to be even easy in the presence of a man whom they know to have pretensions to them, which they are disinclined to favour.

Having in this chapter twice mentioned a drum; a word which our posterity, it is hoped, will not understand in the sense it is here applied, we shall, notwithstanding our present haste, stop a moment to describe the entertainment here meant; and the rather, as we can in a moment describe it.

A drum, then, is an assembly of well-dressed persons, of both sexes, most of whom play at cards, and the rest do nothing at all; while the mistress of the house performs the part of the landlady at an inn; and, like the landlady of an inn, prides herself in the number

ber of her guests, though she doth not always, like her, get any thing by it.

No wonder then, as so much spirits must be required to support any vivacity in these scenes of dulness, that we hear persons of fashion eternally complaining of the want of them; a complaint confined entirely to upper life! How insupportable must we imagine this round of impertinence to have been to Sophia at this time; how difficult must she have found it, to force the appearance of gaiety into her looks, when her mind dictated nothing but the tenderest sorrow, and when every thought was charged with tormenting ideas!

Night, however, at last, restored her to her pillow, where we will leave her to soothe her melancholy at least, though incapable, we fear, of rest; and shall pursue our history, which, something whispers us, is now arrived at the eve of some great event.

CHAP. VII.

A PATHETICK SCENE BETWEEN
MR. ALLWORTHY AND MRS.
MILLER.

MRS. Miller had a long discourse with Mr. Allworthy, at his return from dinner, in which she acquainted him with Jones's having unfortunately lost all which he was pleased to bestow on him at their separation; and with the distresses to which that loss had subjected him: of all which she had received a full account from the faithful retailer, Partridge. She then explained the obligations she had to Jones; not that she was entirely explicit with regard to her daughter; for though she had the utmost confidence in Mr. Allworthy, and though there could be no hopes of keeping an affair secret, which was unhappily known to more than half a dozen; yet she could not prevail with herself to mention those circumstances which reflected most on the chastity of poor Nancy; but smothered that part of her evidence as cautiously, as if she had been before a judge, and the girl was now on her trial for the murder of a bastard.

Allworthy said, there were few characters so absolutely vicious as not to have the least mixture of good in them.

‘However,’ says he, ‘I cannot deny

‘but that you had some obligations to the fellow, bad as he is; and I shall therefore excuse what hath passed already, but must insist, you never mention his name to me more; for I promise you, it was upon the fullest and plainest evidence that I resolved to take the measures I have taken.’—

‘Well, Sir,’ says she, ‘I make not the least doubt, but time will shew all matters in their true and natural colours, and that you will be convinced this poor young man deserves better of you than some other folks that shall be nameless.’

‘Madam,’ cries Allworthy, a little ruffled, ‘I will not hear any reflections on my nephew; and if you ever say a word more of that kind, I will depart from your house that instant. He is the worthiest and best of men; and I once more repeat it to you, he hath carried his friendship to this man to a blameable length, by too long concealing facts of the blackest dye. The ingratitude of the wretch to this good young man, is what I most resent: for, Madam, I have the greatest reason to imagine he had laid a plot to supplant my nephew in my favour, and to have disinherited him.’

‘I am sure, Sir,’ answered Mrs. Miller, a little frightened (for though Mr. Allworthy had the utmost sweetness and benevolence in his smiles, he had great terror in his frowns) ‘I shall never speak against any gentleman you are pleased to think well of. I am sure, Sir, such behaviour would very ill become me, especially when the gentleman is your nearest relation; but, Sir, you must not be angry with me, you must not indeed, for my good wishes to this poor wretch. Sure I may call him so now; though once you would have been angry with me, if I had spoke of him with the least disrespect. How often have I heard you call him your son? How often have you prattled to me of him, with all the fondness of a parent? Nay, Sir, I cannot forget the many tender expressions, the many good things you have told me of his beauty, and his parts, and his virtues; of his good-nature and generosity. I am sure, Sir, I cannot forget them; for I find them all true. I have experienced them in my own cause. They have preserved my fa-

'mily. You must pardon my tears,
'Sir; indeed you must, when I con-
'sider the cruel reverse of fortune,
'which this poor youth, to whom I
'am so much obliged, hath suffered:
'when I consider the loss of your fa-
'vour, which I know he valued more
'than his life, I must, I must lament
'him! If you had a dagger in your
'hand, ready to plunge into my heart,
'I must lament the misery of one whom
'you have loved, and I shall ever love!

Allworthy was pretty much moved
with this speech; but it seemed not to
be with anger: for, after a short silence,
taking Mrs. Miller by the hand, he
said very affectionately to her, 'Come,
'Madam, let us consider a little about
'your daughter. I cannot blame you,
'for rejoicing in a match which pro-
'mises to be advantageous to her; but
'you know this advantage, in a great
'measure, depends on the father's re-
'conciliation. I know Mr. Nightin-
'gale very well, and have formerly
'had concerns with him; I will make
'him a visit, and endeavour to serve
'you in this matter. I believe he is a
'worldly man: but as this is an only
'son, and the thing is now irretrieva-
'ble, perhaps he may, in time, be
'brought to reason. I promise you, I
'will do all I can for you.'

Many were the acknowledgments
which the poor woman made to All-
worthy, for this kind and generous
offer; nor could she refrain from tak-
ing this occasion again to express her
gratitude towards Jones, 'to whom,'
said she, 'I owe the opportunity of
'giving you, Sir, this present trou-
'ble.' Allworthy gently stopped her;
but he was too good a man to be really
offended with the effects of so noble a
principle as now actuated Mrs. Miller;
and, indeed, had not this new affair
inflamed his former anger against Jones,
it is possible he might have been a little
softened towards him, by the report of
an action which malice itself could not
have derived from an evil motive.

Mr. Allworthy and Mrs. Miller had
been above an hour together, when
their conversation was put an end to,
by the arrival of Blisl, and another
person; which other person was no
less than Mr. Dowling, the attorney,
who was now become a great favour-
ite with Mr. Blisl, and whom Mr.
Allworthy, at the desire of his nephew,

had made his steward; and had like-
wise recommended him to Mr. Wes-
tern, from whom the attorney receiv-
ed a promise of being promoted to the
same office upon the first vacancy; and
in the mean time was employed in
transacting some affairs which the squire
then had in London, in relation to a
mortgage.

This was the principal affair which
then brought Mr. Dowling to town;
therefore, he took the same opportu-
nity to charge himself with some mo-
ney for Mr. Allworthy, and to make a
report to him of some other business;
in all which, as it was of much too
dull a nature to find any place in this
history, we will leave the uncle, ne-
phew, and their lawyer, concerned;
and resort to other matters.

CHAP. VIII.

CONCERNING VARIOUS MATTERS.

BEFORE we return to Mr. Jones,
we will take one more view of
Sophia.

Though that young lady had brought
her aunt into great good-humour by
those soothing methods, which we have
before related, she had not brought her
in the least to abate of her zeal for the
match with Lord Fellamar. This zeal
was now inflamed by Lady Bellafton,
who had told her the preceding even-
ing, that she was well satisfied from
the conduct of Sophia, and from her
carriage to his lordship, that all delays
would be dangerous; and that the
only way to succeed was, to press the
match forward with such rapidity, that
the young lady should have no time to
reflect; and be obliged to consent, while
she scarce knew what she did. In which
manner, she said, one half of the mar-
riages among people of condition were
brought about. A fact very probably
true, and to which I suppose is owing
the mutual tenderness which after-
wards exists among so many happy
couples.

A hint of the same kind was given
by the same lady to Lord Fellamar;
and both these so readily embraced the
advice, that the very next day was, at
his lordship's request, appointed by
Mrs. Western for a private interview
between the young parties. This was
com-

communicated to Sophia by her aunt, and insisted upon in such high terms, that, after having urged every thing she possibly could invent against it, without the least effect, she at last agreed to give the highest instance of complaisance which any young lady can give, and consented to see his lordship.

As conversations of this kind afford no great entertainment, we shall be excused from reciting the whole that passed at this interview; in which, after his lordship had made many declarations of the most pure and ardent passion, to the silent, blushing Sophia; she at last collected all the spirits she could raise, and with a trembling, low voice said, 'My lord, you must be yourself conscious whether your former behaviour to me hath been consistent with the professions you now make.'—'Is there,' answered he, 'no way by which I can atone for madness? What I did, I am afraid, must have too plainly convinced you, that the violence of love had deprived me of my senses.'—'Indeed, my lord,' says she, 'it is in your power to give me a proof of an affection which I much rather wish to encourage, and to which I should think myself more beholden.'—'Name it, Madam,' said my lord, very warmly.—'My lord,' says she, looking down upon her fan, 'I know you must be sensible how uneasy this pretended passion of yours hath made me.'—'Can you be so cruel to call it pretended?' says he.—'Yes, my lord,' answered Sophia; 'all professions of love to those whom we persecute, are most insulting pretences. This pursuit of yours is to me a most cruel persecution; nay, it is taking a most ungenerous advantage of my unhappy situation.'—'Most lovely, most adorable charmer, do not accuse me,' cries he, 'of taking an ungenerous advantage, while I have no thoughts but what are directed to your honour and interest; and while I have no view, no hope, no ambition, but to throw myself, honour, fortune, every thing at your feet!'—'My lord,' says she, 'it is that fortune, and those honours, which give you the advantage of which I complain. These are the charms which have seduced my relations; but to me they

are things indifferent. If your lordship will merit my gratitude, there is but one way.'—'Pardon me, divine creature,' said he; 'there can be none. All I can do for you is so much your due, and will give me so much pleasure, that there is no room for your gratitude.'—'Indeed, my lord,' answered she, 'you may obtain my gratitude, my good opinion, every kind thought and wish which it is in my power to bestow; nay, you may obtain them with ease; for, sure, to a generous mind, it must be easy to grant my request. Let me beseech you then, to cease a pursuit, in which you can never have any success. For your own sake, as well as mine, I entreat this favour: for, sure, you are too noble to have any pleasure in tormenting an unhappy creature. What can your lordship propose but uneasiness to yourself, by a perseverance, which, upon my honour, upon my soul, cannot, shall not, prevail with me, whatever distresses you may drive me to!' Here my lord fetched a deep sigh, and then said, 'Is it then, Madam, that I am so unhappy to be the object of your dislike and scorn? or will you pardon me if I suspect there is some other!' Here he hesitated; and Sophia answered with some spirit, 'My lord, I shall not be accountable to you for the reasons of my conduct. I am obliged to your lordship for the generous offer you have made: I own it is beyond either my deserts or expectations; yet I hope, my lord, you will not insist on my reasons, when I declare I cannot accept it.' Lord Fellamar returned much to this, which we do not perfectly understand, and perhaps it could not all be strictly reconciled either to sense or grammar; but he concluded his ranting speech with saying, that if she had pre-engaged herself to any gentleman, however unhappy it would make him, he should think himself bound in honour to desert. Perhaps, my lord laid too much emphasis on the word *gentleman*; for we cannot else well account for the indignation with which he inspired Sophia, who, in her answer, seemed greatly to resent some affront he had given her.

While she was speaking, with her voice more raised than usual, Mrs.

Western came into the room, the fire glaring in her cheeks, and the flames bursting from her eyes. 'I am ashamed,' says she, 'my lord, of the reception which you have met with. I assure your lordship we are all sensible of the honour done us—and I must tell you, Miss Western, the family expect a different behaviour from you.' Here my lord interfered on behalf of the young lady, but to no purpose; the aunt proceeded, till Sophia pulled out her handkerchief, threw herself into a chair, and burst into a violent fit of tears.

The remainder of the conversation between Mrs. Western and his lordship, till the latter withdrew, consisted of bitter lamentations on his side, and on her's, of the strongest assurances that her niece should and would consent to all he wished. 'Indeed, my lord,' says she, 'the girl hath had a foolish education, neither adapted to her fortune nor her family. Her father, I am sorry to say it, is to blame for every thing. The girl hath silly country notions of bashfulness; nothing else, my lord, upon my honour; I am convinced she hath a good understanding at the bottom, and will be brought to reason.'

This last speech was made in the absence of Sophia; for she had some time before left the room, with more appearance of passion than she had ever shewn on any occasion; and now his lordship, after many expressions of thanks to Mrs. Western, many ardent professions of passion which nothing could conquer, and many assurances of perseverance, which Mrs. Western highly encouraged, took his leave for this time.

Before we relate what now passed between Mrs. Western and Sophia, it may be proper to mention an unfortunate accident which had happened; and which had occasioned the return of Mrs. Western with so much fury, as we have seen.

The reader then must know, that the maid who at present attended on Sophia, was recommended by Lady Bellaston, with whom she had lived for some time in the capacity of a comb-brush; she was a very sensible girl, and had received the strictest instructions to watch her young lady very carefully. These instructions, we are sorry to say,

were communicated to her by Mrs. Honour, into whose favour Lady Bellaston had now so ingratiated herself, that the violent affection which the good waiting-woman had formerly borne to Sophia, was entirely obliterated by that great attachment which she had to her new mistress.

Now, when Mrs. Miller was departed, Betty, (for that was the name of the girl) returning to her young lady, found her very attentively engaged in reading a long letter, and the visible emotions which she betrayed on that occasion, might have well accounted for some suspicions which the girl entertained; but, indeed, they had yet a stronger foundation; for she had overheard the whole scene which passed between Sophia and Mrs. Miller.

Mrs. Western was acquainted with all this matter by Betty; who, after receiving many commendations, and some rewards for her fidelity, was ordered, that if the woman who brought the letter, came again, she should introduce her to Mrs. Western herself.

Unluckily Mrs. Miller returned at the very time when Sophia was engaged with his lordship. Betty, according to order, sent her directly to the aunt; who, being mistress of so many circumstances relating to what had passed the day before, easily imposed upon the poor woman to believe that Sophia had communicated the whole affair; and so pumped every thing out of her which she knew, relating to the letter, and relating to Jones.

This poor creature might, indeed, be called simplicity itself. She was one of that order of mortals, who are apt to believe every thing which is said to them: to whom nature hath neither indulged the offensive nor defensive weapons of deceit, and who are constantly liable to be imposed upon by any one, who will only be at the expence of a little falsehood for that purpose. Mrs. Western having drained Mrs. Miller of all she knew, which, indeed, was but little, but which was sufficient to make the aunt suspect a great deal, dismissed her with assurances that Sophia would not see her, that she would send no answer to the letter, nor ever receive another; nor did she suffer her to depart, without a handsome lecture on the merits of an office, to which she could afford no better name

name than that of procurers. This discovery had greatly discomposed her temper, when coming into the apartment next to that in which the lovers were, she overheard Sophia very warmly protesting against his lordship's addresses: at which the rage already kindled, burst forth, and she rushed in upon her niece in a most furious manner, as we have already described, together with what passed at that time, till his lordship's departure.

No sooner was Lord Fellamar gone, than Mrs. Western returned to Sophia, whom she upbraided in the most bitter terms, for the ill use she had made of the confidence reposed in her; and for her treachery in conversing with a man, with whom she had offered but the day before to bind herself in the most solemn oath, never more to have any conversation. Sophia protested she had maintained no such conversation. 'How! how! Miss Western,' said the aunt, 'will you deny your receiving a letter from him yesterday?'—'A letter, Madam!' answered Sophia, somewhat surprized. 'It is not very well bred, Miss,' replies the aunt, 'to repeat my words. I say, a letter, and insist upon your shewing it me immediately.'—'I scorn a lye, Madam,' said Sophia; 'I did receive a letter, but it was without my desire; and, indeed, I may say, against my consent.'—'Indeed, indeed, Miss,' cries the aunt, 'you ought to be ashamed of owning you had received it at all: but where is the letter? for I will see it.'

To this peremptory demand Sophia paused some time before she returned an answer; and at last only excused herself by declaring she had not the letter in her pocket, which was indeed true! upon which her aunt, losing all manner of patience, asked her niece this short question, whether she would resolve to marry Lord Fellamar, or no? to which she received the strongest negative. Mrs. Western then replied with an oath, or something very like one, that she would early the next morning deliver her back into her father's hand.

Sophia then began to reason with her aunt in the following manner: 'Why, Madam, must I of necessity be forced to marry at all? Consider how cruel you would have thought it in your own case, and how much kinder your

parents were in leaving you to your liberty. What have I done to forfeit this liberty? I will never marry contrary to my father's consent, nor without asking yours: and when I ask the consent of either improperly, it will be then time enough to force some other marriage upon me.'—'Can I bear to hear this,' cries Mrs. Western, 'from a girl who hath now a letter from a murderer in her pocket!'—'I have no such letter; I promise you,' answered Sophia; 'and if he be a murderer, he will soon be in no condition to give you any farther disturbance.'—'How! Miss Western,' said the aunt, 'have you the assurance to speak of him in this manner! to own your affection for such a villain to my face!'—'Sure, Madam,' said Sophia, 'you put a very strange construction on my words.'—'Indeed, Miss Western,' cries the lady, 'I shall not bear this usage; you have learnt of your father this manner of treating me; he hath taught you to give me the lye. He hath totally ruined you by his false system of education; and, please Heaven, he shall have the comfort of it's fruits! for, once more I declare to you, that to-morrow morning I will carry you back. I will withdraw all my forces from the field, and remain henceforth, like the wise King of Prussia, in a state of perfect neutrality. You are both too wise to be regulated by my measures: so prepare yourself; for to-morrow morning you shall evacuate this house.'

Sophia remonstrated all she could; but her aunt was deaf to all she said. In this resolution, therefore, we must at present leave her, as there seems to be no hopes of bringing her to change it.

CHAP. IX.

WHAT HAPPENED TO MR. JONES IN THE PRISON.

MR. Jones passed above twenty-four melancholy hours by himself, unless when relieved by the company of Partridge, before Mr. Nightingale returned: not that this worthy young man had deserted or forgot his friend; for, indeed, he had been much the greatest part of the time employed in his service.

He

He had heard upon enquiry that the only persons who had seen the beginning of the unfortunate rencounter, were a crew belonging to a man of war, which then lay at Deptford. To Deptford therefore he went, in search of this crew, where he was informed that the men he sought after were all gone ashore. He then traced them from place to place, till at last he found two of them drinking together, with a third person, at a hedge tavern, near Aldersgate.

Nightingale desired to speak with Jones by himself, (for Partridge was in the room when he came in.) As soon as they were alone, Nightingale taking Jones by the hand, cried, 'Come, my brave friend, be not too much dejected at what I am going to tell you—I am sorry I am the messenger of bad news; but I think it my duty to tell you.'—'I guess already what that bad news is,' cries Jones. 'The poor gentleman then is dead.'—'I hope not,' answered Nightingale; 'he was alive this morning; though I will not flatter you; I fear from the accounts I could get, that his wound is mortal. But if the affair be exactly as you told it, your own remorse would be all you would have reason to apprehend, let what would happen; but forgive me, my dear Tom, if I entreat you to make the worst of your story to your friends. If you disguise any thing to us, you will only be an enemy to yourself.'

'What reason, my dear Jack, have I ever given you,' said Jones, 'to stab me with so cruel a suspicion?'—'Have patience,' cries Nightingale, 'and I will tell you all. After the most diligent enquiry I could make, I at last met with two of the fellows who were present at this unhappy accident; and I am sorry to say, they do not relate the story so much in your favour as you yourself have told it.'—'Why, what do they say?' cries Jones. 'Indeed, what I am sorry to repeat; as I am afraid of the consequence of it to you. They say, that they were at too great a distance to overhear any words that passed between you; but they both agree that the first blow was given by you.'

—'Then, upon my soul,' answered Jones, 'they injure me. He not only struck me first, but struck me with-

out the least provocation. What should induce those villains to accuse me falsely?'—'Nay, that I cannot guess,' said Nightingale; 'and if you yourself, and I who am so heartily your friend, cannot conceive a reason why they should belye you, what reason will an indifferent court of justice be able to assign, why they should not believe them? I repeated the question to them several times, and so did another gentleman who was present, who, I believe, is a sea-faring man, and who really acted a very friendly part by you; for he begged them often to consider, that there was the life of a man in the case; and asked them over and over, if they were certain; to which they both answered, that they were, and would abide by their evidence upon oath. For Heaven's sake, my dear friend, recollect yourself! for if this should appear to be the fact, it will be your business to think in time of making the best of your interest. I would not shock you; but you know, I believe, the severity of the law, whatever verbal provocations may have been given you.'—'Alas! my friend,' cries Jones, 'what interest hath such a wretch as I? besides, do you think I would even wish to live with the reputation of a murderer? If I had any friends, (as, alas! I have none) could I have the confidence to solicit them to speak in the behalf of a man condemned for the blackest crime in human nature? believe me, I have no such hope; but I have some reliance on a Throne still greatly superior; which will, I am certain, afford me all the protection I merit.'

He then concluded with many solemn and vehement protestations of the truth of what he had at first asserted.

The faith of Nightingale was now again staggered, and began to incline to credit his friend; when Mrs. Miller appeared, and made a sorrowful report of the success of her embassy; which when Jones had heard, he cried out most heroically, 'Well, my friend, I am now indifferent as to what shall happen, at least with regard to my life; and if it be the will of Heaven that I shall make an atonement with that for the blood I have spilt, I hope the Divine Goodness will one day suffer

‘suffer my honour to be cleared, and
‘that the words of a dying man at
‘least will be believed, so far as to
‘justify his character.’

A very mournful scene now passed between the prisoner and his friends; at which, as few readers would have been pleased to be present, so few, I believe, will desire to hear it particularly related. We will, therefore, pass on to the entrance of the turnkey, who acquainted Jones, that there was a lady without who desired to speak with him, when he was at leisure.

Jones declared his surprize at this message. He said, he knew no lady in the world whom he could possibly expect to see there. However, as he saw no reason to decline seeing any person, Mrs. Miller and Mr. Nightingale presently took their leave, and he gave orders to have the lady admitted.

If Jones was surprized at the news of a visit from a lady, how greatly was he astonished when he discovered this lady to be no other than Mrs. Waters! In this astonishment, then, we shall leave him a while, in order to cure the surprize of the reader, who will likewise, probably, not a little wonder at the arrival of this lady.

Who this Mrs. Waters was, the reader pretty well knows; what she was, he must be perfectly satisfied. He will therefore be pleased to remember, that this lady departed from Upton in the same coach with Mr. Fitzpatrick and the other Irish gentleman, and in their company travelled to the Bath.

Now there was a certain office in the gift of Mr. Fitzpatrick at that time vacant, namely, that of a wife; for the lady who had lately filled that office had resigned, or at least deserted her duty. Mr. Fitzpatrick therefore, having thoroughly examined Mrs. Waters on the road, found her extremely fit for the place, which, on her arrival at Bath, he presently conferred upon her, and she without any scruple accepted. As husband and wife this gentleman and lady continued together all the time they stayed at Bath; and as husband and wife they arrived together in town.

Whether Mr. Fitzpatrick was so wise a man as not to part with one good thing till he had secured another, which he had at present only a prospect

of regaining; or whether Mrs. Waters had so well discharged her office, that he intended still to retain her as principal, and to make his wife (as is often the case) only her deputy, I will not say; but certain it is, he never mentioned his wife to her, never communicated to her the letter given him by Mrs. Western, nor ever once hinted his purpose of repossessing his wife; much less did he ever mention the name of Jones. For though he intended to fight with him wherever he met him, he did not imitate those prudent persons who think a wife, a mother, a sister, or sometimes a whole family, the safest seconds on these occasions. The first account, therefore, which she had of all this, was delivered to her from his lips, after he was brought home from the tavern where his wound had been dressed.

As Mr. Fitzpatrick, however, had not the clearest way of telling a story at any time, and was now, perhaps, a little more confused than usual, it was some time before she discovered, that the gentleman who had given him this wound was the very same person from whom her heart had received a wound, which though not of a mortal kind, was yet so deep, that it had left a considerable scar behind it. But no sooner was she acquainted that Mr. Jones himself was the man who had been committed to the Gate-house for this supposed murder, than she took the first opportunity of committing Mr. Fitzpatrick to the care of his nurse, and hastened away to visit the conqueror.

She now entered the room with an air of gaiety, which received an immediate check from the melancholy aspect of poor Jones, who started and blessed himself when he saw her. Upon which she said, ‘Nay, I do not wonder at your surprize; I believe you did not expect to see me; for few gentlemen are troubled here with visits from any lady, unless a wife. You see the power you have over me, Mr. Jones. Indeed, I little thought, when we parted at Upton, that our next meeting would have been in such a place.’—‘Indeed, Madam,’ says Jones, ‘I must look upon this visit as kind; few will follow the miserable, especially to such dismal habitations.’—‘I protest, Mr. Jones,’ says she, ‘I can hardly

‘hardly persuade myself you are the same agreeable fellow I saw at Upton. Why, your face is more miserable than any dungeon in the universe! What can be the matter with you?’—‘I thought, Madam,’ said Jones, ‘as you knew of my being here, you knew the unhappy reason.’

—‘Pugh,’ says she, ‘you have pinked a man in a duel, that’s all!’ Jones expressed some indignation at this levity, and spoke with the utmost contrition for what had happened. To which she answered, ‘Well then, Sir, if you take it so much to heart, I will relieve you; the gentleman is not dead; and, I am pretty confident, is in no danger of dying. The surgeon indeed, who first dressed him, was a young fellow, and seemed desirous of representing his case to be as bad as possible, that he might have the more honour from curing him; but the king’s surgeon hath seen him since, and says, unless from a fever, of which there are at present no symptoms, he apprehends not the least danger of life.’ Jones shewed great satisfaction in his countenance at this report; upon which she affirmed the truth of it, adding, ‘By the most extraordinary accident in the world I lodge at the same house, and have seen the gentleman; and I promise you he doth you justice, and says, whatever be the consequence, that he was entirely the aggressor, and that you was not in the least to blame.’

Jones expressed the utmost satisfaction at the account which Mrs. Waters brought him. He then informed her of many things which she well knew before; as who Mr. Fitzpatrick was, the occasion of his resentment, &c. he likewise told her several facts of which she was ignorant, as the adventure of the muff, and other particulars, concealing only the name of Sophia. He then lamented the follies and vices of which he had been guilty; every one of which, he said, had been attended with such ill consequences,

that he should be unpardonable if he did not take warning, and quit those vicious courses for the future. He lastly concluded, with assuring her of his resolution to sin no more, lest a worse thing should happen to him.

Mrs. Waters with great pleasantry ridiculed all this, as the effects of low spirits and confinement. She repeated some witticisms about *the devil when he was sick*, and told him, she doubted not but shortly to see him at liberty, and as lively a fellow as ever: ‘And then,’ says she, ‘I don’t question, but your conscience will be safely delivered of all those qualms that it is now so sick in breeding.’

Many more things of this kind she uttered, some of which it would do her no great honour, in the opinion of some readers, to remember; nor are we quite certain but that the answers made by Jones would be treated with ridicule by others. We shall therefore, suppress the rest of this conversation; and only observe, that it ended at last with perfect innocence, and much more to the satisfaction of Jones than of the lady: for the former was greatly transported with the news she had brought him; but the latter was not altogether so pleased with the penitential behaviour of a man, whom she had at her first interview conceived a very different opinion of from what she now entertained of him.

Thus the melancholy occasioned by the report of Mr. Nightingale was pretty well effaced; but the dejection into which Mrs. Miller had thrown him, still continued: the account she gave, so well tallied with the words of Sophia herself in her letter, that he made not the least doubt but that she had disclosed his letter to her aunt, and had taken a fixed resolution to abandon him. The torments this thought gave him, were to be equalled only by a piece of news which fortune had yet in store for him; and which we shall communicate in the second chapter of the ensuing book.



THE
H I S T O R Y
OF A
F O U N D L I N G.
BOOK XVIII.

CONTAINING ABOUT SIX DAYS.

CHAP. I.

A FAREWEL TO THE READER.



WE are now, reader, arrived at the last stage of our long journey. As we have, therefore, travelled together through so many pages, let us behave to one another like fellow-travellers in a stage-coach, who have passed several days in company of each other; and who, notwithstanding any bickerings or little animosities which may have occurred on the road, generally make all up at last, and mount, for the last time, into their vehicle with cheerfulness and good-humour; since after this one stage, it may possibly happen to us, as it commonly happens to them, never to meet more.

As I have here taken up this simile, give me leave to carry it a little farther. I intend, then, in this last book, to imitate the good company I have mentioned, in their last journey. Now, it is well known, that all jokes and railery are at this time laid aside: whatever characters any of the passengers have, for the jest-sake, personated on the road, are now thrown off, and

the conversation is usually plain and serious.

In the same manner, if I have now and then, in the course of this work, indulged any pleasantry for thy entertainment, I shall here lay it down. The variety of matter, indeed, which I shall be obliged to cram into this book, will afford no room for any of those ludicrous observations which I have elsewhere made, and which may sometimes, perhaps, have prevented thee from taking a nap when it was beginning to steal upon thee. In this last book, thou wilt find nothing (or at most very little) of that nature; all will be plain narrative only: and indeed when thou hast perused the many great events which this book will produce, thou wilt think the number of pages contained in it, scarce sufficient to tell the story.

And now, my friend, I take this opportunity (as I shall have no other) of heartily wishing thee well. If I have been an entertaining companion to thee, I promise thee, it is what I have desired. If in any thing I have offended, it was really without any intention. Some things, perhaps, here said, may have hit thee, or thy friends; but I do most solemnly declare, they

were not pointed at thee or them. I question not, but thou hast been told, among other stories of me, that thou wast to travel with a very scurrilous fellow: but whoever told thee so, did me an injury. No man detests and despises scurrility, more than myself; nor hath any man more reason; for none hath ever been treated with more: and what is a very severe fate, I have had some of the abusive writings of those very men, fathered upon me; who, in other of their works, have abused me themselves, with the utmost virulence.

All these works, however, I am well convinced, will be dead before this page shall offer itself to thy perusal: for, however short the period may be, of my own performances, they will most probably outlive their own infirm author, and the weakly productions of his abusive contemporaries.

CHAP. II.

CONTAINING A VERY TRAGICAL INCIDENT.

WHILE Jones was employed in those unpleasant meditations, with which we left him tormenting himself, Partridge came stumbling into the room, with his face paler than ashes, his eyes fixed in his head, his hair standing an end, and every limb trembling. In short, he looked as he would have done, had he seen a spectre, or had he, indeed, been a spectre himself.

Jones, who was little subject to fear, could not avoid being somewhat shocked at this sudden appearance. He did, indeed, himself change colour, and his voice a little faltered, while he asked him what was the matter.

'I hope, Sir,' said Partridge, 'you will not be angry with me. Indeed, I did not listen, but I was obliged to stay in the outward room. I am sure I wish I had been a hundred miles off, rather than have heard what I have heard.'—'Why, what is the matter?' said Jones. 'The matter, Sir? O good Heaven!' answered Partridge, 'was that woman who is just gone out, the woman who was with you at Upton?'—'She was,' Partridge, cries Jones.

'And did you really, Sir, go to bed with that woman?' said he, trembling. 'I am afraid, what passed between us, is no secret,' said Jones. 'Nay, but pray, Sir, for Heaven's sake, Sir, answer me!' cries Partridge. 'You know I did,' cries Jones. 'Why, then, the Lord have mercy upon your soul, and forgive you!' cries Partridge; 'but as sure as I stand here alive, you have been a-bed with your own mother!'

Upon these words, Jones became in a moment, a greater picture of horror than Partridge himself. He was, indeed, for some time, struck dumb with amazement, and both stood staring wildly at each other. At last, his words found way; and, in an interrupted voice, he said—'How! how! what's this you tell me!'—'Nay, Sir,' cries Partridge, 'I have not breath left enough to tell you now—but what I have said, is most certainly true: that woman who now went out, is your own mother. How unlucky was it for you, Sir, that I did not happen to see her at that time, to have prevented it! Sure the devil himself must have contrived to bring about this wickedness.'

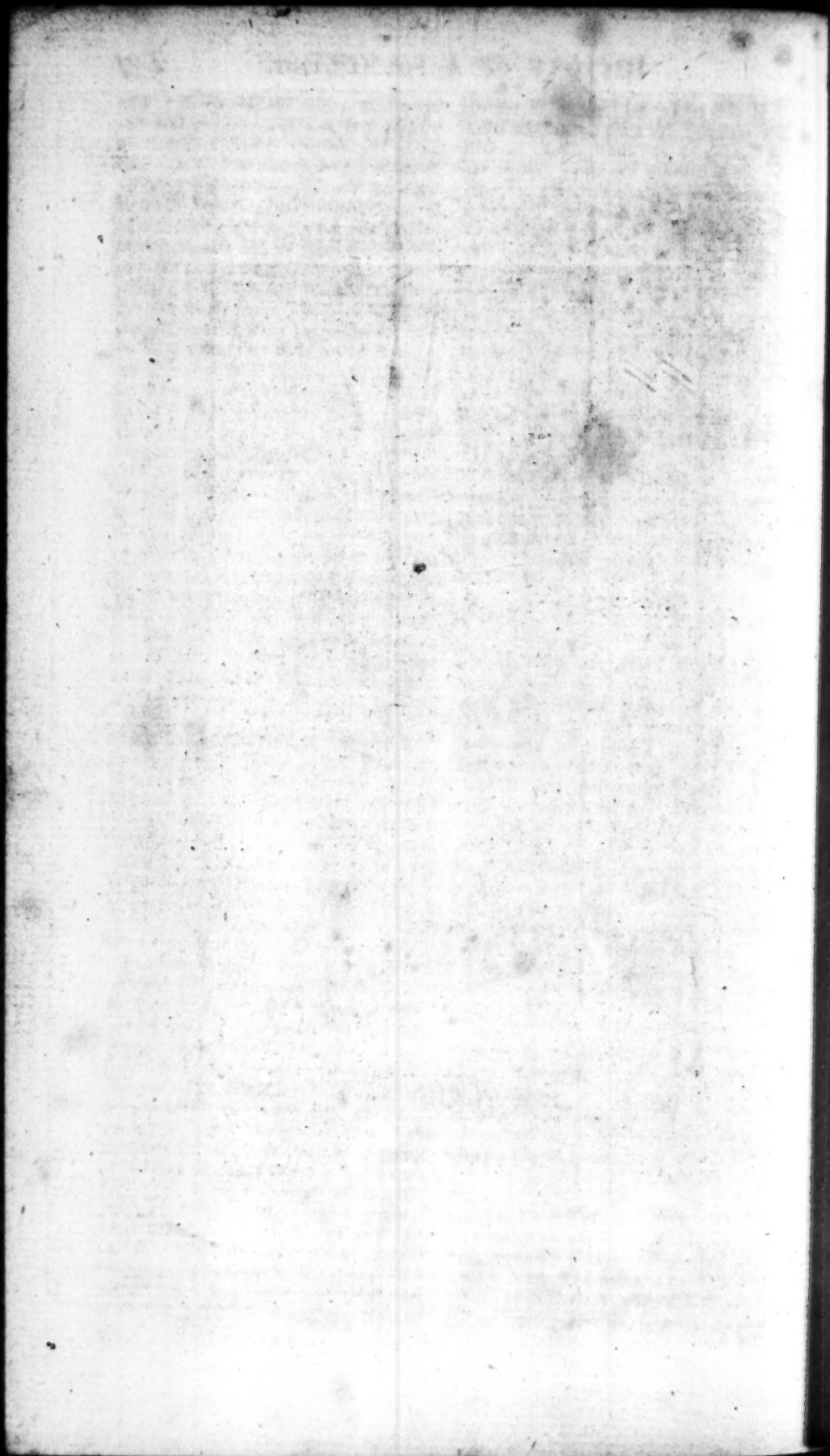
'Sure,' cries Jones, 'Fortune will never have done with me, till she hath driven me to distraction. But why do I blame Fortune? I am myself the cause of all my misery. All the dreadful mischiefs which have befallen me, are the consequences only of my own folly and vice. What thou hast told me, Partridge, hath almost deprived me of my senses. And was Mrs. Waters, then—But why do I ask! for thou must certainly know her. If thou hast affection for me; nay, if thou hast any pity, let me beseech thee to fetch this miserable woman back again to me. O good Heaven! Incest—with a mother! To what am I reserved?' He then fell into the most violent and frantick agonies of grief and despair, in which Partridge declared he would not leave him: but at last, having vented the first torrent of passion, he came a little to himself; and then, having acquainted Partridge that he would find this wretched woman in the same house where the wounded gentleman was lodged, he dispatched him in quest of her.

If



Plate III.

Published as the Act direct, by Hurdell & Co. in 1780.



If the reader will please to refresh his memory, by turning to the scene at Upton, in the ninth book, he will be apt to admire the many strange accidents which unfortunately prevented any interview between Partridge and Mrs. Waters, when she spent a whole day there with Mr. Jones. Instances of this kind, we may frequently observe in life; where the greatest events are produced by a nice train of little circumstances: and more than one example of this may be discovered by the accurate eye, in this our history.

After a fruitless search, of two or three hours, Partridge returned back to his master, without having seen Mrs. Waters. Jones, who was in a state of desperation at his delay, was almost raving mad, when he brought him this account. He was not long, however, in this condition, before he received the following letter.

‘SIR,

‘SINCE I left you, I have seen a gentleman, from whom I have learnt something concerning you, which greatly surprizes and affects me: but as I have not, at present, leisure to communicate a matter of such high importance, you must suspend your curiosity till our next meeting, which shall be the first moment I am able to see you. O Mr. Jones, little did I think, when I passed that happy day at Upton, the reflection upon which, is like to embitter all my future life, who it was to whom I owed such perfect happiness. Believe me to be ever sincerely, your unfortunate

‘J. WATERS.

‘P. S. I would have you comfort yourself as much as possible; for Mr. Fitzpatrick is in no manner of danger; so that whatever other grievous crimes you may have to repent of, the guilt of blood is not among the number.’

Jones having received the letter, let it drop (for he was unable to hold it, and, indeed, had scarce the use of any one of his faculties.) Partridge took it up, and having received consent, by silence, read it likewise; nor had it

upon him a less sensible effect. The pencil, and not the pen, should describe the horrors which appeared in both their countenances. While they both remained speechless, the turnkey entered the room, and without taking any notice of what sufficiently discovered itself in the faces of them both, acquainted Jones, that a man without desired to speak with him. This person was presently introduced, and was no other than Black George.

As sights of horror were not so usual to George, as they were to the turnkey, he instantly saw the great disorder which appeared in the face of Jones. This he imputed to the accident that had happened, which was reported in the very worst light in Mr. Western’s family; he concluded, therefore, that the gentleman was dead, and that Mr. Jones was in a fair way of coming to a shameful end. A thought which gave him much uneasiness: for George was of a compassionate disposition; and, notwithstanding a small breach of friendship which he had been over-tempted to commit, was, in the main, not insensible of the obligations he had formerly received from Mr. Jones.

The poor fellow, therefore, scarce refrained from a tear at the present sight. He told Jones he was heartily sorry for his misfortunes, and begged him to consider, if he could be of any manner of service. ‘Perhaps, Sir,’ said he, ‘you may want a little matter of money upon this occasion; if you do, Sir, what little I have, is heartily at your service.’

Jones shook him very heartily by the hand, and gave him many thanks for the kind offer he had made; but answered, he had not the least want of that kind. Upon which, George began to press his services more eagerly than before. Jones again thanked him, with assurances that he wanted nothing, which was in the power of any man living to give. ‘Come, come, my good master,’ answered George, ‘do not take the matter so much to heart. Things may end better than you imagine; to be sure, you an’t the first gentleman who hath killed a man, and yet come off.’—‘You are wide of the matter, George,’ said Partridge, ‘the gentleman is not dead, nor like to die. Don’t disturb

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my master, at present, for he is troubled about a matter, in which it is not in your power to do him any good.'—'You don't know what I may be able to do, Mr. Partridge,' answered George; 'if his concern is about my young lady, I have some news to tell my master.'—'What do you say, Mr. George?' cries Jones: 'Hath any thing lately happened in which my Sophia is concerned?'—'My Sophia! How dares such a wretch as I, mention her so prophanely!'—'I hope she will be yours yet,' answered George. 'Why, yes, Sir, I have something to tell you about her. Madam Western hath just brought Madam Sophia home, and there hath been a terrible to do. I could not possibly learn the very right of it; but my master, he hath been in a vast big passion, and so was Madam Western; and I heard her say, as she went out of doors into her chair, that she would never set her foot in master's house again. I don't know what's the matter, not I; but every thing was very quiet when I came out; but Robin, who waited at supper, said he had never seen the squire, for a long while, in such good humour with young Madam; that he kissed her several times, and swore she should be her own mistress, and he never would think of confining her any more. I thought this news would please you, and so I slipped out, though it was so late, to inform you of it.' Mr. Jones assured George, that it did greatly please him; for though he should never more presume to lift his eyes towards that incomparable creature, nothing could so much relieve his misery, as the satisfaction he should always have in hearing of her welfare.

The rest of the conversation which passed at the visit, is not important enough to be here related. The reader will, therefore, forgive us this abrupt breaking off, and be pleased to hear how this great good will of the squire towards his daughter was brought about.

Mrs. Western, on her first arrival at her brother's lodging, began to set forth the great honours and advantages which would accrue to the family by the match with Lord Fellamar,

which her niece had absolutely refused; in which refusal, when the squire took the part of his daughter, she fell immediately into the most violent passion; and so irritated and provoked the squire, that neither his patience nor his prudence could bear it any longer; upon which there ensued between them both so warm a bout at altercation, that perhaps the regions of Billingsgate never equalled it. In the heat of this scolding, Mrs. Western departed, and had, consequently, no leisure to acquaint her brother with the letter which Sophia received, which might have possibly produced ill effects; but, to say truth, I believe it never once occurred to her memory at this time.

When Mrs. Western was gone, Sophia, who had been hitherto silent, as well indeed from necessity as inclination, began to return the compliment which her father had made her, in taking her part against her aunt, by taking his likewise against the lady. This was the first time of her so doing, and it was in the highest degree acceptable to the squire. Again, he remembered that Mr. Allworthy had insisted on an entire relinquishment of all violent means; and, indeed, as he made no doubt but that Jones would be hanged, he did not in the least question succeeding with his daughter by fair means; he now, therefore, once more gave a loose to his natural fondness for her; which had such an effect on the dutiful, grateful, tender and affectionate heart of Sophia, that, had her honour given to Jones, and something else, perhaps, in which he was concerned, been removed, I much doubt whether she would not have sacrificed herself to a man she did not like, to have obliged her father. She promised him, she would make it the whole business of her life to oblige him, and would never marry any man against his consent; which brought the old man so near to his highest happiness, that he was resolved to take the other step, and went to bed compleatly drunk.

CHAP. III.

ALLWORTHY VISITS OLD NIGHT-INGALE; WITH A STRANGE DISCOVERY THAT HE MADE ON THAT OCCASION.

THE

THE morning after these things had happened, Mr. Allworthy went, according to his promise, to visit old Nightingale, with whom his authority was so great, that after having sat with him three hours, he at last prevailed with him to consent to see his son.

Here an accident happened of a very extraordinary kind; one, indeed, of those strange chances, whence very good and grave men have concluded, that Providence often interposes in the discovery of the most secret villainy, in order to caution men from quitting the paths of honesty, however warily they tread in those of vice.

Mr. Allworthy, at his entrance into Mr. Nightingale's, saw Black George; he took no notice of him, nor did Black George imagine he had perceived him. However, when their conversation on the principal point was over, Allworthy asked Nightingale, whether he knew one George Seagrim, and upon what business he came to his house. 'Yes,' answered Nightingale, 'I know him very well; and a most extraordinary fellow he is, who, in these days, hath been able to hoard up 500 l. from renting a very small estate of 30 l. a year.'—'And is this the story which he hath told you?' cries Allworthy. 'Nay, it is true, I promise you,' said Nightingale; 'for I have the money now in my own hands, in five bank-bills, which I am to lay out, either in a mortgage, or in some purchase in the north of England.' The bank-bills were no sooner produced, at Allworthy's desire, than he blessed himself at the strangeness of the discovery. He presently told Nightingale, that these bank-bills were formerly his; and then acquainted him with the whole affair. As there are no men who complain more of the frauds of business, than highwaymen, gamesters, and other thieves of that kind; so there are none who so bitterly exclaim against the frauds of gamesters, &c. as usurers, brokers, and other thieves of this kind; whether it be, that the one way of cheating is a discountenance or reflection upon the other, or that money, which is the common mistress of all cheats, makes them regard each other in the light of rivals; but Nightingale no sooner heard the story, than he exclaimed against the fellow in

terms much severer than the justice and honesty of Allworthy had bestowed on him.

Allworthy desired Nightingale to retain both the money and the secret, till he should hear farther from him; and if he should in the mean time see the fellow, that he would not take the least notice to him of the discovery which he had made. He then returned to his lodgings, where he found Mrs. Miller in a very dejected condition, on account of the information she had received from her son-in-law. Mr. Allworthy, with great cheerfulness, told her, that he had much good news to communicate; and, with little farther preface, acquainted her, that he had brought Mr. Nightingale to consent to see his son; and did not in the least doubt to effect a perfect reconciliation between them; though he found the father more soured by another accident of the same kind, which had happened in his family. He then mentioned the running away of the uncle's daughter, which he had been told by the old gentleman, and which Mrs. Miller, and her son-in-law, did not yet know.

The reader may suppose Mrs. Miller received this account with great thankfulness, and no less pleasure; but so uncommon was her friendship to Jones, that I am not certain whether the uneasiness she suffered for his sake, did not overbalance her satisfaction, at hearing a piece of news tending so much to the happiness of her own family; nor whether even this very news, as it reminded her of the obligations she had to Jones, did not hurt as well as please her; when her grateful heart said to her, 'While my own family is happy, how miserable is the poor creature, to whose generosity we owe the beginning of all this happiness!'

Allworthy having left her a little while to chew the cud (if I may use that expression) on these first tidings, told her, he had still something more to impart, which he believed would give her pleasure. 'I think,' said he, 'I have discovered a pretty considerable treasure belonging to the young gentleman, your friend; but, perhaps, indeed, his present situation may be such, that it will be of no service to him.' The latter part of the

the speech gave Mrs. Miller to understand who was meant; and she answered with a sigh, 'I hope not, Sir.' — 'I hope so too,' cries Allworthy, 'with all my heart; but my nephew told me this morning, he had heard a very bad account of the affair.' — 'Good Heaven, Sir!' said she. 'Well, I must not speak; and yet it is certainly very hard to be obliged to hold one's tongue, when one hears——' 'Madam,' said Allworthy, 'you may say whatever you please; you know me too well, to think I have a prejudice against any one; and, as for that young man, I assure you I should be heartily pleased to find he could acquit himself of every thing, and particularly of this sad affair. You can testify the affection I have formerly borne him. The world, I know, censured me for loving him so much. I did not withdraw that affection from him without thinking I had the justest cause. Believe me, Mrs. Miller, I should be glad to find I have been mistaken.' Mrs. Miller was going eagerly to reply, when a servant acquainted her, that a gentleman without desired to speak with her immediately. Allworthy then enquired for his nephew, and was told that he had been for some time in his room, with the gentleman who used to come to him; and whom Mr. Allworthy guessing rightly to be Mr. Dowling, he desired presently to speak with him.

When Dowling attended, Allworthy put the case of the bank-notes to him, without mentioning any name; and asked in what manner such a person might be punished. To which Dowling answered, he thought he might be indicted on the Black Act; but said, as it was a matter of some nicety, it would be proper to go to counsel. He said, he was to attend counsel presently, upon an affair of Mr. Western's, and if Mr. Allworthy pleased, he would lay the case before them. This was agreed to; and then Mrs. Miller opening the door, cried, 'I ask pardon, I did not know you had company;' but Allworthy desired her to come in, saying, he had finished his business. Upon which Mr. Dowling withdrew, and Mrs. Miller introduced Mr. Nightingale the younger, to return thanks for the great kindness done him by Allworthy; but she had scarce

patience to let the young gentleman finish his speech, before the interrupted him, saying, 'O Sir! Mr. Nightingale brings great news about poor Mr. Jones! he hath been to see the wounded gentleman, who is out of all danger of death! and, what is more, declares he fell upon poor Mr. Jones himself, and beat him. I am sure, Sir, you would not have Mr. Jones be a coward. If I was a man myself, I am sure if any man was to strike me, I should draw my sword. — Do pray, my dear, tell Mr. Allworthy, tell him all yourself!' Nightingale then confirmed what Mrs. Miller had said; and concluded with many handsome things of Jones, who was, he said, one of the best-natured fellows in the world, and not in the least inclined to be quarrelsome. Here Nightingale was going to cease, when Mrs. Miller again begged him to relate all the many dutiful expressions he had heard him make use of towards Mr. Allworthy. 'To say the utmost good of Mr. Allworthy,' cries Nightingale, 'is doing no more than strict justice, and can have no merit in it; but, indeed, I must say, no man can be more sensible of the obligations he hath to so good a man, than is poor Jones. Indeed, Sir, I am convinced the weight of your displeasure is the heaviest burden he lies under. He hath often lamented it to me, and hath as often protested in the most solemn manner, he hath never been intentionally guilty of any offence towards you; nay, he hath sworn, he would rather die a thousand deaths, than he would have his conscience upbraid him with one disrespectful, ungrateful, or undutiful thought towards you. But I ask pardon, Sir; I am afraid I presume to intermeddle too far in so tender a point.' — 'You have spoke no more than what a christian ought,' cries Mrs. Miller. 'Indeed, Mr. Nightingale,' answered Allworthy, 'I applaud your generous friendship, and I wish he may merit it of you. I confess, I am glad to hear the report you bring from this unfortunate gentleman; and if that matter should turn out to be as you represent it (and, indeed, I doubt nothing of what you say) I may, perhaps, in time, be brought to think better

‘ better than lately I have of this young man : for, this good gentlewoman here, nay, all who know me, can witness that I loved him as dearly as if he had been my own son. Indeed, I have considered him as a child sent by Fortune to my care. I still remember the innocent, the helpless situation in which I found him. I feel the tender pressure of his little hands at this moment. He was my darling ; indeed, he was ! At which words he ceased, and the tears stood in his eyes.

As the answer which Mrs. Miller made may lead us into fresh matters, we will here stop, to account for the visible alteration in Mr. Allworthy’s mind, and the abatement of his anger to Jones. Revolutions of this kind, it is true, do frequently occur in histories and dramatick writers, for no other reason, than because the history or play draws to a conclusion, and are justified by authority of authors ; yet, though we insist upon as much authority as any author whatever, we shall use this power very sparingly, and never but when we are driven to it by necessity ; which we do not at present foresee will happen in this work.

This alteration, then, in the mind of Mr. Allworthy, was occasioned by a letter he had just received from Mr. Square, and which we shall give the reader in the beginning of the next chapter.

CHAP. IV.

CONTAINING TWO LETTERS IN VERY DIFFERENT STILES.

‘ MY WORTHY FRIEND,

‘ I Informed you in my last, that I was forbidden the use of the waters, as they were found by experience rather to encrease than lessen the symptoms of my distemper. I must now acquaint you with a piece of news, which, I believe, will afflict my friends more than it hath afflicted me. Dr. Harrington and Dr. Brewster have informed me, that there is no hopes of my recovery.

‘ I have somewhere read, that the great use of philosophy is to learn to die. I will not, therefore, so far disgrace mine, as to shew any sur-

‘ prize at receiving a lesson which I must be thought to have so long studied. Yet, to say the truth, one page of the gospel teaches this lesson better than all the volumes of ancient or modern philosophers.— The assurance it gives us of another life is a much stronger support to a good mind, than all the consolations that are drawn from the necessity of nature, the emptiness or satiety of our enjoyments here, or any other topick of those declamations which are sometimes capable of arming our minds with a stubborn patience in bearing the thoughts of death ; but never of raising them to a real contempt of it, and much less of making us think it as a real good. I would not here be understood to throw the horrid censure of atheism, or even the absolute denial of immortality, on all who are called philosophers. Many of that sect, as well ancient as modern, have, from the light of reason, discovered some hopes of a future state ; but, in reality, that light was so faint and glimmering, and the hopes were so uncertain and precarious, that it may be justly doubted on which side their belief turned. Plato himself concludes his Phædon with declaring, that his best arguments amount only to raise a probability ; and Cicero himself seems rather to profess an inclination to believe, than any actual belief in the doctrines of immortality. As to myself, to be very sincere with you, I never was much in earnest in this faith, till I was in earnest a christian.

‘ You will, perhaps, wonder at the latter expression ; but I assure you, it hath not been till very lately, that I could, with truth, call myself so. The pride of philosophy had intoxicated my reason, and the sublimest of all wisdom appeared to me, as it did to the Greeks of old, to be foolishness. God hath, however, been so gracious to shew me my error in time, and to bring me into the way of truth, before I sunk into utter darkness for ever.

‘ I find myself beginning to grow weak. I shall, therefore, hasten to the main purpose of this letter.

‘ When I reflect on the actions of my past life, I know of nothing which
‘ fits

fits heavier upon my conscience, than the injustice I have been guilty of to that poor wretch, your adopted son. I have, indeed, not only connived at the villainy of others, but been myself active in injustice towards him. Believe me, my dear friend, when I tell you, on the word of a dying man, he hath been basely injured. As to the principal fact, upon the misrepresentation of which you discarded him, I solemnly assure you he is innocent. When you lay upon your supposed death-bed, he was the only person in the house who testified any real concern; and what happened afterwards, arose from the wildness of his joy on your recovery; and, I am sorry to say it, from the baseness of another person; (but it is my desire to justify the innocent, and to accuse none.) Believe me, my friend, this young man hath the noblest generosity of heart, the most perfect capacity for friendship, the highest integrity, and, indeed, every virtue which can ennoble a man. He hath some faults, but among them is not to be numbered the least want of duty or gratitude towards you. On the contrary, I am satisfied, when you dismissed him from your house, his heart bled for you more than for himself.

Worldly motives were the wicked and base reasons of my concealing this from you so long: to reveal it now, I can have no inducement, but the desire of serving the cause of truth, of doing right to the innocent, and of making all the amends in my power for a past offence. I hope this declaration, therefore, will have the effect desired, and will restore this deserving young man to your favour; the hearing of which, while I am yet alive, will afford the utmost consolation to, Sir, your most obliged, obedient humble servant,

• THOMAS SQUARE.

The reader will, after this, scarce wonder at the revolution so visibly appearing in Mr. Allworthy; notwithstanding he received from Thwackum, by the same post, another letter of a very different kind, which we shall here add, as it may possibly be the last time

we shall have occasion to mention the name of that gentleman,

‘SIR,

I Am not at all surprized at hearing from your worthy nephew a fresh instance of the villainy of Mr. Square the atheist's young pupil. I shall not wonder at any murders he may commit; and I heartily pray that your own blood may not seal up this final commitment to the place of wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Though you cannot want sufficient calls to repentance, for the many unwarrantable weaknesses exemplified in your behaviour to this wretch, so much to the prejudice of your own lawful family, and of your character, I say, though these may sufficiently be supposed to prick and goad your conscience at this season; I should yet be wanting to my duty, if I spared to give you some admonition, in order to bring you to a due sense of your errors. I therefore pray you seriously to consider the judgment which is likely to overtake this wicked villain; and let it serve, at least, as a warning to you, that you may not for the future despise the advice of one who is so indefatigable in his prayers for your welfare.

Had not my hand been withheld from due correction, I had scourged much of this diabolical spirit out of a boy, of whom, from his infancy, I discovered the devil had taken such entire possession; but reflections of this kind now come too late.

I am sorry you have given away the living of Western so hastily. I should have applied on that occasion earlier, had I thought you would not have acquainted me previous to the disposition. Your objection to pluralities is being righteous over-much. If there were any crime in the practice, so many godly men would not agree to it. If the vicar of Alder-grove should die, (as we hear he is in a declining way) I hope you will think of me, since I am certain you must be convinced of my most sincere attachment to your highest welfare; a welfare to which all worldly considerations

derations are as trifling as the small tithes mentioned in Scripture are, when compared to the weighty matters of the law. I am, Sir, your faithful humble servant,

‘ROGER THWACKUM.’

This was the first time Thwackum ever wrote in this authoritative stile to Allworthy; and of this he had afterwards sufficient reason to repent, as is the case of those who mistake the highest degree of goodness for the lowest degree of weakness. Allworthy had, indeed, never liked this man. He knew him to be proud and ill-natured; he also knew that his divinity itself was tainted with his temper, and such as in many respects he himself did by no means approve: but he was, at the same time, an excellent scholar, and most indefatigable in teaching the two lads. Add to this, the strict severity of his life and manners, an unimpeached honesty, and a most devout attachment to religion. So that, upon the whole, though Allworthy did not esteem nor love the man, yet he could never bring himself to part with a tutor to the boys, who was, both by learning and industry, extremely well qualified for his office; and he hoped, that as they were bred up in his own house, and under his own eye, he should be able to correct whatever was wrong in Thwackum's instructions.

CHAP. V.

IN WHICH THE HISTORY IS CONTINUED.

MR. Allworthy, in his last speech, had recollected some tender ideas concerning Jones, which had brought tears into the good man's eyes. This Mrs. Miller observing, said, ‘Yes, yes, Sir, your goodness to this poor young man is known, notwithstanding all your care to conceal it; but there is not a single syllable of truth in what those villains said. Mr. Nightingale hath now discovered the whole matter. It seems these fellows were employed by a lord, who is a rival of poor Mr. Jones, to have pressed him on board a ship—I assure them, I don't know who they will press

next! Mr. Nightingale here hath seen the officer himself, who is a very pretty gentleman, and hath told him all, and is very sorry for what he undertook; which he would never have done, had he known Mr. Jones to have been a gentleman; but he was told that he was a common strolling vagabond.’

Allworthy stared at all this, and declared he was a stranger to every word she said. ‘Yes, Sir,’ answered she, ‘I believe you are. It is a very different story, I believe, from what those fellows told the lawyer.’

‘What lawyer, Madam? What is it you mean?’ said Allworthy. ‘Nay, nay,’ said she, ‘this is so like you, to deny your own goodness! but Mr. Nightingale here saw him.’—‘Saw whom, Madam?’ answered he. ‘Why, your lawyer, Sir,’ said she, ‘that you so kindly sent to enquire into the affair.’—‘I am still in the dark, upon my honour,’ said Allworthy. ‘Why then, do you tell him, my dear Sir,’ cries she. ‘Indeed, Sir,’ said Nightingale, ‘I did see that very lawyer who went from you, when I came into the room, at an alehouse at Aldersgate, in company with two of the fellows who were employed by Lord Fellamar to press Mr. Jones, and who were, by that means, present at the unhappy rencounter between him and Mr. Fitzpatrick.’—‘I own, Sir,’ said Mrs. Miller, ‘when I saw this gentleman come into the room to you, I told Mr. Nightingale that I apprehended you had sent him thither to enquire into the affair.’ Allworthy shewed marks of astonishment in his countenance at this news; and was, indeed for two or three minutes struck dumb by it. At last, addressing himself to Mr. Nightingale, he said, ‘I must confess myself, Sir, more surprized at what you tell me, than I have ever been before at anything in my whole life. Are you certain this was the gentleman?’—‘I am most certain,’ answered Nightingale. ‘At Aldersgate?’ cries Allworthy. ‘And was you in company with this lawyer and the two fellows?’—‘I was, Sir,’ said the other, ‘very near half an hour.’—‘Well, Sir,’ said Allworthy; ‘and in what manner did the lawyer behave? Did you hear all that passed

between him and the fellows?—'No, Sir,' answered Nightingale; 'they had been together before I came.' In my presence the lawyer said little; but after I had several times examined the fellows, who persisted in a story directly contrary to what I have heard from Mr. Jones, and which I find by Mr. Fitzpatrick was a rank falsehood; the lawyer then desired the fellows to say nothing but what was the truth; and seemed to speak so much in favour of Mr. Jones, that when I saw the same person with you, I concluded your goodness had prompted you to send him thither. —'And did you not send him thither?' says Mrs. Miller. 'Indeed, I did not,' answered Allworthy; 'nor did I know he had gone on such an errand till this moment.'—'I see it all!' said Mrs. Miller: 'upon my soul, I see it all! No wonder they have been clo-setted so close lately.—Son Nightingale, let me beg you run for these fellows immediately—find them out, if they are above ground. I will go myself!'—'Dear Madam,' said Allworthy, 'be patient, and do me the favour to send a servant up stairs to call Mr. Dowling hither, if he be in the house; or if not, Mr. Blifil.' Mrs. Miller went out muttering something to herself, and presently returned with an answer, that Mr. Dowling was gone; but that the other, as she called him, was coming.

Allworthy was of a cooler disposition than the good woman, whose spirits were all up in arms in the cause of her friend. He was not, however, without some suspicions which were near a-kin to her's. When Blifil came into the room, he asked him with a very serious countenance, and with a less friendly look than he had ever before given him, whether he knew any thing of Mr. Dowling's having seen any of the persons who were present at the duel between Jones and another gentleman.

There is nothing so dangerous as a question which comes by surprize on a man whose business it is to conceal truth or to defend falsehood. For which reason, those worthy personages, whose noble office it is to save the lives of their fellow-creatures at the Old Bailey, take the utmost care, by frequent previous examinations, to di-

vine every question, which may be asked their clients on the day of trial, that they may be supplied with proper and ready answers, which the most fertile invention cannot supply in an instant. Besides, the sudden and violent impulse on the blood, occasioned by these surprizes, causes frequently such an alteration in the countenance, that a man is obliged to give evidence against himself. And such, indeed, were the alterations which the countenance of Blifil underwent from this sudden question, that we can scarce blame the eagerness of Mrs. Miller, who immediately cried out, 'Guilty, upon my honour! guilty, upon my soul!'

Mr. Allworthy sharply rebuked her for this impetuosity; and then turning to Blifil, who seemed sinking into the earth, he said, 'Why do you hesitate, Sir, at giving me an answer? You certainly must have employed him; for he would not, of his own accord, I believe, have undertaken such an errand, and especially without acquainting me.'

Blifil then answered, 'I own, Sir, I have been guilty of an offence; yet may I hope your pardon.'—'My pardon?' said Allworthy, very angrily. 'Nay, Sir,' answered Blifil, 'I knew you would be offended; yet surely my dear uncle will forgive the effects of the most amiable of human weaknesses. Compassion for those who do not deserve it, I own, is a crime; and yet it is a crime from which you yourself are not entirely free. I know I have been guilty of it in more than one instance to this very man; and I will own I did send Mr. Dowling, not on a vain and fruitless enquiry, but to discover the witnesses, and to endeavour to soften their evidence. This, Sir, is the truth; which, though I intended to conceal from you, I will not deny.'

'I confess,' said Nightingale, 'this is the light in which it appeared to me from the gentleman's behaviour.' 'Now, Madam,' said Allworthy, 'I believe you will once in your life own you have entertained a wrong suspicion, and are not so angry with my nephew as you was.'

Mrs. Miller was silent; for though she could not so hastily be pleased with Blifil, whom she looked upon to have been the ruin of Jones, yet, in this particular

particular instance, he had imposed upon her as well as the rest; so entirely had the devil stood his friend. And, indeed, I look upon the vulgar observation, 'That the devil often deserts his friends, and leaves them in the lurch,' to be a great abuse on that gentleman's character. Perhaps he may sometimes desert those who are only his cup acquaintance; or who, at most, are but half his; but he generally stands by those who are thoroughly his servants, and helps them off in all extremities, till their bargain expires.

As a conquered rebellion strengthens a government, or as health is more perfectly established by recovery from some diseases; so anger, when removed, often gives new life to affection. This was the case of Mr. Allworthy; for Blifil having wiped off the greater suspicion, the lesser, which had been raised by Square's letter, sunk of course, and was forgotten; and Thwackum, with whom he was greatly offended, bore alone all the reflections which Square had cast on the enemies of Jones.

As for that young man, the resentment of Mr. Allworthy began more and more to abate towards him. He told Blifil, he did not only forgive the extraordinary efforts of his good-nature, but would give him the pleasure of following his example. Then turning to Mrs. Miller, with a smile, which would have become an angel, he cried, 'What say you, Madam; shall we take a hackney-coach, and all of us together pay a visit to your friend? I promise you, it is not the first visit I have made in a prison.'

Every reader, I believe, will be able to answer for the worthy woman; but they must have a great deal of good-nature, and be well acquainted with friendship, who can feel what she felt on this occasion. Few, I hope, are capable of feeling what now passed in the mind of Blifil; but those who are, will acknowledge, that it was impossible for him to raise any objection to this visit. Fortune, however, or the gentleman lately mentioned above, stood his friend, and prevented his undergoing so great a shock; for at the very instant when the coach was sent for, Partridge arrived, and having called Mrs. Miller from the company, acquainted her

with the dreadful accident lately come to light; and hearing Mr. Allworthy's intention, begged her to find some means of stopping him; 'For,' says he, 'the matter must at all hazards be kept a secret from him; and if he should now go, he will find Mr. Jones and his mother, who arrived just as I left him, lamenting over one another the horrid crime they had ignorantly committed.'

The poor woman, who was almost deprived of her senses at this dreadful news, was never less capable of invention than at present. However, as women are much readier at this than men, she bethought herself of an excuse; and, returning to Allworthy, said, 'I am sure, Sir, you will be surprized at hearing any objection from me to the kind proposal you just now made; and yet I am afraid of the consequence of it, if carried immediately into execution. You must imagine, Sir, that all the calamities which have lately befallen this poor young fellow, must have thrown him into the lowest dejection of spirits: and now, Sir, should we all on a sudden fling him into such a violent fit of joy, as I know your presence will occasion, it may, I am afraid, produce some fatal mischief; especially as his servant, who is without, tells me he is very far from being well.'

'Is his servant without?' cries Allworthy; 'pray call him hither, I will ask him some questions concerning his master.'

Partridge was at first afraid to appear before Mr. Allworthy; but was at length persuaded, after Mrs. Miller, who had often heard his whole story from his own mouth, had promised to introduce him.

Allworthy recollected Partridge the moment he came into the room, though many years had passed since he had seen him. Mrs. Miller, therefore, might have spared here a formal oration, in which, indeed, she was something prolix: for the reader, I believe, may have observed already that the good woman, among other things, had a tongue always ready for the service of her friends.

'And are you,' said Allworthy to Partridge, 'the servant of Mr. Jones?' — 'I can't say, Sir,' answered he, 'that I am regularly a servant; but I live with him, an't please your honour,

‘at present.’ *Non sum qualis eram*, as your honour very well knows.’

Mr. Allworthy then asked him many questions concerning Jones, as to his health, and other matters; to all which Partridge answered, without having the least regard to what was, but considered only what he would have things appear; for a strict adherence to truth was not among the articles of this honest fellow’s morality, or his religion.

During this dialogue, Mr. Nightingale took his leave, and presently after Mrs. Miller left the room, when Allworthy likewise dispatched Blifil; for he imagined that Partridge, when alone with him, would be more explicit than before company. They were no sooner left in private together, than Allworthy began, as in the following chapter,

CHAP. VI.

IN WHICH THE HISTORY IS FARTHER CONTINUED.

‘SURE, friend,’ said the good man, ‘you are the strangest of all human beings: not only to have suffered as you have formerly, for obstinately persisting in a falsehood; but to persist in it thus to the last, and to pais thus upon the world for the servant of your own son! What interest can you have in all this! what can be your motive?’

‘I see, Sir,’ said Partridge, falling down upon his knees, ‘that your honour is prepossessed against me, and resolved not to believe any thing I say; and therefore what signifies my protestations? But yet there is One above, who knows that I am not the father of this young man.’

‘How!’ said Allworthy, ‘will you yet deny what you was formerly convicted of upon such unanswerable, such manifest evidence? Nay, what is a confirmation is your being now found with this very man, of all which twenty years ago appeared against you? I thought you had left

the country; nay, I thought you had been long since dead. In what manner did you know any thing of this young man? Where did you meet with him, unless you had kept some correspondence together? Do not deny this; for I promise you, it will greatly raise your son in my opinion, to find that he hath such a sense of filial duty, as privately to support his father for so many years.’

‘If your honour will have patience to hear me,’ said Partridge, ‘I will tell you all.’ Being bid go on, he proceeded thus. ‘When your honour conceived that displeasure against me, it ended in my ruin soon after; for I lost my little school; and the minister, thinking, I suppose, it would be agreeable to your honour, turned me out from the office of clerk; so that I had nothing to trust to but the barber’s shop, which, in a country place like that, is a poor livelihood; and when my wife died (for till that time I received a pension of twelve pounds a year from an unknown hand; which, indeed, I believe was your honour’s own, for nobody that ever I heard of doth these things besides) but, as I was saying, when she died, this pension forsook me; so that now, as I owed two or three small debts, which began to be troublesome to me, particularly one which an attorney brought up by law-charges from fifteen shillings to near thirty pounds; and as I found all my usual means of living had forsook me, I packed up my little all as well as I could, and went off.

‘The first place I came to, was Salisbury, where I got into the service of a gentleman belonging to the law, and one of the best gentlemen that ever I knew; for he was not only good to me, but I know a thousand good and charitable acts which he did while I staid with him; and I have known him often refuse business, because it was pauperly and oppressive.’ — ‘You need not be so particular,’ said Allworthy; ‘I know this gen-

* This is a fact which I knew happen to a poor clergyman in Dorsetshire, by the villainy of an attorney; who, not contented with the exorbitant costs to which the poor man was put by a single action, brought afterwards another action on the judgment, as it was called. A method frequently used to oppress the poor, and bring money into the pockets of attorneys, to the great scandal of the law, of the nation, of christianity, and even of human nature itself.

tleman,

‘tleman, and a very worthy man he is, and an honour to his profession.’—‘Well, Sir,’ continued Partridge, ‘from hence I removed to Lymington, where I was above three years in the service of another lawyer, who was likewise a very good sort of a man, and to be sure, one of the merriest gentlemen in England. Well, Sir, at the end of the three years, I set up a little school, and was likely to do well again, had it not been for a most unlucky accident. Here I kept a pig; and one day, as ill-fortune would have it, this pig broke out, and did a trespass, I think they call it, in a garden belonging to one of my neighbours, who was a proud, revengeful man, and employed a lawyer, one—one—I can’t think of his name; but he sent for a writ against me, and had me to *size*. When I came there, Lord have mercy upon me! to hear what the counsellor said. There was one that told my lord a parcel of the confoundedst lyes about me; he said, that I used to drive my hogs into other folks gardens, and a great deal more; and at last he said, he hoped I had at last brought my hogs to a fair market. To be sure, one would have thought, that instead of being owner only of one poor little pig, I had been the greatest hog-merchant in England. Well—’ ‘Pray,’ said Allworthy, ‘do not be so particular; I have heard nothing of your son yet.’—‘O it was a great many years,’ answered Partridge, ‘before I saw my son, as you are pleased to call him. I went over to Ireland after this, and taught school at Cork, (for that one suit ruined me again, and I lay seven years in Winchester gaol.)’—‘Well,’ said Allworthy, ‘pass that over till your return to England.’—‘Then, Sir,’ said he, ‘it was about half a year ago that I landed at Bristol, where I stayed some time, and not finding it to do there, and hearing of a place between that and Gloucester, where the barber was just dead, I went thither, and there I had been about two months when Mr. Jones came thither.’ He then gave Allworthy a very particular account of their first meeting, and of every thing, as well as he could remember, which had happened from that day to this;

frequently interlarding his story with panegyricks on Jones; and not forgetting to insinuate the great love and respect which he had for Allworthy. He concluded with saying, ‘Now, Sir, I have told your honour the whole truth:’ and then repeated a most solemn protestation, that he was no more the father of Jones than of the Pope of Rome; and imprecated the most bitter curses on his head, if he did not speak truth.

‘What am I to think of this matter?’ cries Allworthy. ‘For what purpose should you so strongly deny a fact, which I think it would be rather your interest to own?’—‘Nay, Sir,’ answered Partridge, (for he could hold no longer) ‘if your honour will not believe me, you are like soon to have satisfaction enough. I wish you had mistaken the mother of this young man, as well as you have his father.’ And now being asked what he meant; with all the symptoms of horror, both in his voice and countenance, he told Allworthy the whole story, which he had a little before expressed such a desire to Mrs. Miller to conceal from him.

Allworthy was almost as much shocked at this discovery, as Partridge himself had been while he related it. ‘Good Heavens!’ says he, ‘in what miserable distresses do vice and imprudence involve men! How much beyond our designs are the effects of wickedness sometimes carried!’ He had scarce uttered these words, when Mrs. Waters came hastily and abruptly into the room. Partridge no sooner saw her, than he cried, ‘Here, Sir, here is the very woman herself. This is the unfortunate mother of Mr. Jones; I am sure she will acquit me before your honour. Pray, Madam—’

Mrs. Waters, without paying any regard to what Partridge said, and almost without taking any notice of him, advanced to Mr. Allworthy. ‘I believe, Sir, it is so long since I had the honour of seeing you, that you do not recollect me.’—‘Indeed,’ answered Allworthy, ‘you are so very much altered, on many accounts, that had not this man already acquainted me who you are, I should not have immediately called you to my remembrance. Have you, Madam, any particular

particular business which brings you to me?' Allworthy spoke this with great reserve; for the reader may easily believe he was not well pleased with the conduct of this lady; neither with what he had formerly heard, nor with what Partridge had now delivered.

Mrs. Waters answered, 'Indeed, Sir, I have very particular business with you; and it is such as I can impart only to yourself. I must desire, therefore, the favour of a word with you alone; for I assure you, what I have to tell you is of the utmost importance.'

Partridge was then ordered to withdraw; but before he went, he begged the lady to satisfy Mr. Allworthy that he was perfectly innocent. To which she answered, 'You need be under no apprehension, Sir; I shall satisfy Mr. Allworthy very perfectly of that matter.'

Then Partridge withdrew; and that passed between Mr. Allworthy and Mrs. Waters which is written in the next chapter.

CHAP. VII.

CONTINUATION OF THE HISTORY.

MRS. Waters remaining a few moments silent, Mr. Allworthy could not refrain from saying, 'I am sorry, Madam, to perceive, by what I have since heard, that you have made so very ill a use—' Mr. Allworthy, says she, interrupting him, 'I know I have faults, but ingratitude to you is not one of them. I never can nor shall forget your goodness, which I own I have very little deserved; but be pleased to wave all upbraiding me at present, as I have to important an affair to communicate to you concerning this young man, to whom you have given my maiden name of Jones.'

'Have I then,' said Allworthy, 'ignorantly punished an innocent man, in the person of him who hath just left us? Was he not the father of the child?'—'Indeed he was not,' said Mrs. Waters. 'You may be pleased to remember, Sir, I formerly told you, you should one day know; and I acknowledge myself to have been guilty of a cruel ne-

glect, in not having discovered it to you before. Indeed, I little knew how necessary it was.'—'Well, Madam,' said Allworthy, 'be pleased to proceed.'—'You must remember, Sir,' said she, 'a young fellow whose name was Summer.'—'Very well,' cries Allworthy; 'he was the son of a clergyman of great learning and virtue, for whom I had the highest friendship.'—'So it appeared, Sir,' answered she; 'for I believe you bred the young man up, and maintained him at the university; where, I think, he had finished his studies, when he came to reside at your house; a finer man, I must say, the sun never shone upon; for, besides the handsomest person I ever saw, he was so genteel, and had so much wit and good breeding.'—'Poor gentleman,' said Allworthy, 'he was, indeed, untimely snatched away; and little did I think he had any sins of this kind to answer for; for I plainly perceive, you are going to tell me, he was the father of your child.'

'Indeed, Sir,' answered she, 'he was not.'—'How?' said Allworthy, 'to what then tends all this preface?'—'To a story, Sir,' said she, 'which I am concerned falls to my lot to unfold to you. O, Sir, prepare to hear something which will surprise you, will grieve you!'—'Speak,' said Allworthy; 'I am conscious of no crime, and cannot be afraid to hear.'—'Sir,' said she, 'that Mr. Summer, the son of your friend, educated at your expence, who, after living a year in the house, as if he had been your own son, died there of the small-pox, was tenderly lamented by you, and buried, as if he had been your own; that Summer, Sir, was the father of this child.'—'How!' said Allworthy, 'you contradict yourself.'—'That I do not,' answered she; 'he was, indeed, the father of this child, but not by me.'—'Take care, Madam,' said Allworthy; 'do not, to shun the imputation of any crime, be guilty of falsehood. Remember, there is One from whom you can conceal nothing, and before whose tribunal, falsehood will only aggravate your guilt.'—'Indeed, Sir,' says she, 'I am not his mother; nor would I now think myself

myself so for the world!—' I know
 your reason,' said Allworthy; ' and
 shall rejoice, as much as you, to find
 it otherwise; yet, you must remem-
 ber, you yourself confessed it before
 me.'—' So far what I confessed,' said
 she, ' was true, that these hands con-
 veyed the infant to your bed; con-
 veyed it thither, at the command of
 it's mother; at her commands, I af-
 terwards owned it, and thought my-
 self, by her generosity, nobly reward-
 ed, both for my secrecy and my
 shame.'—' Who could this woman
 be?' said Allworthy. ' Indeed, I
 tremble to name her,' answered Mrs.
 Waters. ' By all this preparation, I
 am to guess that she was a relation
 of mine,' cried he. ' Indeed, she
 was a near one.' At which words
 Allworthy started, and she continued,
 ' You had a sister, Sir.'—' A sister!' re-
 peated he, looking aghast. ' As there
 is truth in heaven,' cries she, ' your
 sister was the mother of that child
 you found between your sheets.'—
 ' Can it be possible?' cries he, ' good
 Heavens!'—' Have patience, Sir,'
 said Mrs. Waters, ' and I will unfold
 to you the whole story. Just after
 your departure for London, Miss
 Bridget came one day to the house
 of my mother. She was pleased to
 say, she had heard an extraordinary
 character of me, for my learning
 and superior understanding to all the
 young women there, so she was pleas-
 ed to say. She then bid me come to
 her to the great house; where, when
 I attended, she employed me to
 read to her. She expressed great
 satisfaction in my reading, shewed
 great kindness to me, and made me
 many presents. At last, she began
 to catechize me on the subject of
 secrecy, to which I gave her such
 satisfactory answers, that, at last,
 having locked the door of her room,
 she took me into her closet, and then
 locking that door likewise, she said,
 she should convince me of the vast
 reliance she had on my integrity,
 by communicating a secret, in which
 her honour, and consequently her
 life, was concerned. She then stopt,
 and after a silence of a few minutes,
 during which, she often wiped her
 eyes, she enquired of me, if I thought
 my mother might safely be confided
 in. I answered, I would stake my

life on her fidelity. She then im-
 parted to me the great secret, which
 laboured in her breast, and which,
 I believe, was delivered with more
 pains than she afterwards suffered in
 child-birth. It was then contrived,
 that my mother and myself only
 should attend at the time, and that
 Mrs. Wilkins should be sent out of
 the way, as she accordingly was, to
 the very farthest part of Dorsetshire,
 to enquire the character of a servant;
 for the lady had turned away her
 own maid near three months before;
 during all which time I officiated
 about her person upon trial, as she
 said; though, as she afterwards de-
 clared, I was not sufficiently handy
 for the place. This, and many other
 such things, which she used to say of
 me, were all thrown out to prevent
 any suspicion which Wilkins might
 hereafter have, when I was to own
 the child; for she thought it could
 never be believed she would venture
 to hurt a young woman, with whom
 she had intrusted such a secret. You
 may be assured, Sir, I was well paid
 for all these affronts, which, together
 with being informed with the occa-
 sion of them, very well contented me.
 Indeed, the lady had a greater suspi-
 cion of Mrs. Wilkins, than of any
 other person: not that she had the
 least aversion to the gentlewoman,
 but she thought her incapable of
 keeping a secret, especially from you,
 Sir; for I have often heard Miss
 Bridget say, that if Mrs. Wilkins
 had committed a murder, she believ-
 ed she would acquaint you with it.
 At last, the expected day came; and
 Mrs. Wilkins, who had been kept
 a week in readiness, and put off from
 time to time, upon some pretence or
 other, that she might not return too
 soon, was dispatched. Then the
 child was born, in the presence only
 of myself and my mother, and was
 by my mother conveyed to her own
 house, where it was privately kept
 by her, till the evening of your
 return; when I, by the command of
 Miss Bridget, conveyed it into the
 bed where you found it: and all
 suspicions were afterwards laid asleep
 by the artful conduct of your sister,
 in pretending ill-will to the boy, and
 that any regard she shewed him, was
 out of mere complaisance to you.

Mrs.

Mrs. Waters then made many protestations of the truth of this story, and concluded by saying, 'Thus, Sir, you have at last discovered your nephew; for so, I am sure, you will hereafter think him; and I question not, but he will be both an honour and a comfort to you, under that appellation.'

'I need not, Madam,' said Allworthy, 'express my astonishment at what you have told me; and yet, surely you would not, and could not, have put together so many circumstances to evidence an untruth. I confess, I recollect some passages relating to that Summer, which formerly gave me a conceit, that my sister had some liking to him. I mentioned it to her: for I had such a regard to the young man, as well on his own account, as on his father's, that I should willingly have consented to a match between them; but she expressed the highest disdain of my unkind suspicion, as she called it; so that I never spoke more on the subject. Good Heavens! Well! the Lord disposeth all things. Yet, sure it was a most unjustifiable conduct in my sister, to carry this secret with her out of the world!'—'I promise you, Sir,' said Mrs. Waters, 'she always professed a contrary intention; and frequently told me, she intended one day to communicate it to you. She said, indeed, she was highly rejoiced that her plot had succeeded so well; and that you had, of your own accord, taken such a fancy to the child; that it was yet unnecessary to make any express declaration. Oh! Sir, had that lady lived to have seen this poor young man, turned like a vagabond from your house; nay, Sir, could she have lived to hear, that you had yourself employed a lawyer to prosecute him for a murder of which he was not guilty!—Forgive me, Mr. Allworthy, I must say it was unkind! Indeed, you have been abused, he never deserved it of you!'—'Indeed, Madam,' said Allworthy, 'I have been abused by the person, whoever he was, that told you so.'—'Nay, Sir,' said she, 'I would not be mistaken, I did not presume to say you were guilty of any wrong. The gentleman, who came to me, proposed no such mat-

ter: he only said, taking me for Mr. Fitzpatrick's wife, that if Mr. Jones had murdered my husband, I should be assisted with any money I wanted to carry on the prosecution, by a very worthy gentleman, who, he said, was well apprized what a villain I had to deal with. It was by this man I found out who Mr. Jones was; and this man, whose name is Dowling, Mr. Jones tells me, is your steward. I discovered his name by a very odd accident; for he himself refused to tell it me; but Partridge, who met him at my lodgings, the second time he came, knew him formerly at Salisbury.'

'And did this Mr. Dowling,' says Allworthy, with great astonishment in his countenance, 'tell you that I would assist in the prosecution!'—'No, Sir,' answered she, 'I will not charge him wrongfully. He said I should be assisted; but he mentioned no name. Yet, you must pardon me, Sir, if from circumstances, I thought it could be no other.'—'Indeed, Madam,' says Allworthy, 'from circumstances, I am too well convinced it was another. Good Heaven! by what wonderful means is the blackest and deepest villainy sometimes discovered!'—'Shall I beg you, Madam, to stay till the person you have mentioned comes? for I expect him every minute; nay, he may be, perhaps, already in the house.'

Allworthy then stepped to the door, in order to call a servant, when in came, not Mr. Dowling, but the gentleman who will be seen in the next chapter.

CHAP. VIII.

FARTHER CONTINUATION.

THE gentleman who now arrived, was no other than Mr. Western. He no sooner saw Allworthy, than, without considering in the least the presence of Mrs. Waters, he began to vociferate in the following manner: 'Fine doings at my house! A rare kettle of fish I have discovered at last! who the devil would be plagued with a daughter?'—'What's the matter, neighbour?' said Allworthy. 'Matter enough,' answered Western; 'when

when I thought she was a just coming to; nay, when she had in a manner promised me, to do as I would ha' her, and when I was a hoped to have had nothing more to do than to have sent for the lawyer, and finished all; what do you think I have found out? the little b— hath been playing tricks with me all the while, and carrying on a correspondence with that bastard of yours. Sister Western, whom I have quarrelled with, upon her account, lent me word o't, and I ordered her pockets to be searched when she was asleep, and here I have got un signed with the son of a whore's own name. I have not had patience to read half o't, for 'tis longer than one of Parson Supple's sermons; but I find plainly, it is all about love; and, indeed, what should it be else? I have packed her up in chamber again, and tomorrow morning, down she goes into the country, unless she consents to be married directly, and there she shall live in a garret upon bread and water all her days; and the sooner such a b— breaks her heart, the better; though, d—n her, that I believe is too tough. She will live long enough to plague me.— Mr. Western, answered Allworthy, 'you know I have always protested against force, and you yourself consented that none should be used.'—'Ay,' cries he, 'that was only upon condition that she would consent without. What the devil and Doctor Faustus I than't I do what I will with my own daughter, especially when I desire nothing but her own good?'—'Well, neighbour,' answered Allworthy, 'if you will give me leave, I will undertake once to argue with the young lady.'—'Will you?' said Western, 'why, that is kind now, and neighbourly; and mayhap, you will do more than I have been able to do with her; for I promise you, she hath a very good opinion of you.'—'Well, Sir,' said Allworthy, 'if you will go home, and release the young lady from her captivity, I will wait upon her within this half hour.'—'But suppose,' said Western, 'she should run away with un in the mean time? for Lawyer Dowling tells me, there is no hopes of hanging the fellow at last; for that the man is alive, and

like to do well, and that he thinks Jones will be out of prison again presently.'—'How!' said Allworthy, 'what did you employ him then to enquire, or to do any thing in that matter?'—'Not I,' answered Western, 'he mentioned it to me just now of his own accord.'—'Just now!' cries Allworthy, 'why, where did you see him then? I want much to see Mr. Dowling.'—'Why, you may see un an you will presently at my lodgings; for there is to be a meeting of lawyers there this morning, about a mortgage. Icod! I shall lose two or three thousand pounds, I believe, by that honest gentleman, Mr. Nightingale.'—'Well, Sir,' said Allworthy, 'I will be with you within the half hour.'—'And do for once,' cries the squire, 'take a fool's advice; never think of dealing with her by gentle methods; take my word for it, those will never do. I have tried um long enough. She must be frightened into it, there is no other way. Tell her, I'm her father; and of the horrid sin of disobedience, and of the dreadful punishment of it in 't'other world, and then tell her about being locked up all her life in a garret in this, and being kept only on bread and water.'—'I will do all I can,' said Allworthy; 'for I promise you, there is nothing I wish for, more than an alliance with this amiable creature.'—'Nay, the girl is well enough for matter o'that,' cries the squire; 'a man may go farther, and meet with worse meat; that I may declare o'her, thof she be my own daughter. And if she will but be obedient to me, there is n'arrow a father within a hundred miles o' the place, that loves a daughter better than I do: but I see you are busy with the lady here, so I will go huome and expect you, and so your humble servant.'

As soon as Mr. Western was gone, Mrs. Waters said, 'I see, Sir, the squire hath not the least remembrance of my face. I believe, Mr. Allworthy, you would not have known me neither. I am very considerably altered since that day when you so kindly gave me that advice, which I had been happy had I followed.'—'Indeed, Madam,' cries Allworthy, 'it gave me great concern, when I first

heard the contrary. — Indeed, Sir, says she, 'I was ruined by a very deep scheme of villainy; which, if you knew, though I pretend not to think it would justify me in your opinion, it would at least mitigate my offence, and induce you to pity me: you are not now at leisure to hear my whole story; but this I assure you, I was betrayed by the most solemn promises of marriage; nay, in the eye of Heaven, I was married to him: for, after much reading on the subject, I am convinced that particular ceremonies are only requisite to give a legal sanction to marriage, and have only a worldly use, in giving a woman the privileges of a wife; but that she who lives constant to one man, after a solemn private alliance, whatever the world may call her, hath little to charge on her own conscience. — I am sorry, Madam, said Allworthy, 'you made so ill an use of your learning. Indeed, it would have been well that you had been possessed of much more, or had remained in a state of ignorance. And yet, Madam, I am afraid you have more than this sin to answer for. — During his life,' answered she, 'which was above a dozen years, I most solemnly assure you, I had not. And consider, Sir, on my behalf, what is in the power of a woman, stripped of her reputation, and left destitute, whether the good-natured world, will suffer such a stray sheep, to return to the road of virtue, even if she was never so desirous. I protest then, I would have chose it, had it been in my power; but necessity drove me into the arms of Captain Waters, with whom, though still unmarried, I lived as a wife for many years, and went by his name. I parted with this gentleman at Worcester, on his march against the rebels, and it was then I accidentally met with Mr. Jones, who rescued me from the hands of a villain. Indeed, he is the worthiest of men. No young gentleman of his age, is, I believe, freer from vice, and few have the twentieth part of his virtues; nay, whatever vices he hath had, I am firmly persuaded, he hath now taken a resolution to abandon them. — I hope he hath,' cries Allworthy, 'and I hope he will preserve

that resolution. I must say, I have still the same hopes with regard to yourself. The world, I do agree, are apt to be too unmerciful on these occasions; yet, time and perseverance will get the better of this their disinclination, as I may call it, to pity; for though they are not, like Heaven, ready to receive a penitent sinner; yet, a continued repentance, will at length obtain mercy even with the world. This you may be assured of, Mrs. Waters, that whenever I find you are sincere in such good intentions, you shall want no assistance in my power to make them effectual.'

Mrs. Waters fell now upon her knees before him; and, in a flood of tears, made him many most passionate acknowledgments of his goodness; which, as she truly said, favoured more of the divine than human nature.

Allworthy raised her up, and spoke in the most tender manner, making use of every expression which his invention could suggest to comfort her, when he was interrupted by the arrival of Mr. Dowling; who, upon his first entrance, seeing Mrs. Waters, started, and appeared in some confusion; from which he soon recovered himself, as well as he could, and then said, he was in the utmost haste to attend counsel at Mr. Western's lodgings; but, however, thought it his duty to call and acquaint him with the opinion of counsel, upon the case which he had before told him; which was, that the conversion of the monies in that case, could not be questioned in a criminal cause; but that an action of trover might be brought, and if it appeared to the jury, to be the monies of plaintiff, that plaintiff would recover a verdict for the value.

Allworthy, without making any answer to this, bolted the door; and then advancing with a stern look to Dowling, he said, 'Whatever be your haste, Sir, I must first receive an answer to some questions. Do you know this lady?' — 'That lady, Sir?' answered Dowling, with great hesitation. Allworthy then, with the most solemn voice, said, 'Look you, Mr. Dowling, as you value my favour, or your continuance a moment longer in my service, do not hesitate nor prevaricate; but answer faithfully and truly to every question I ask. — Do you know

‘know this lady?’—‘Yes, Sir,’ said Dowling, ‘I have seen the lady.’—‘Where, Sir?’—‘At her own lodgings.’—‘Upon what business did you go thither, Sir? and who sent you?’—‘I went, Sir, to enquire, Sir, about Mr. Jones.’—‘And who sent you to enquire about him?’—‘Who, Sir? why, Sir, Mr. Blifil sent me.’—‘And what did you say to the lady concerning that matter?’—‘Nay, Sir, it is impossible to recollect every word.’—‘Will you please, Madam, to assist the gentleman’s memory?’—‘He told me, Sir,’ said Mrs. Waters, ‘that if Mr. Jones had murdered my husband, I should be assisted with any money I wanted, to carry on the prosecution, by a very worthy gentleman, who was well apprized what a villain I had to deal with. These, I can safely swear, were the very words he spoke.’—‘Were these the words, Sir?’ said Allworthy. ‘I cannot charge my memory exactly,’ cries Dowling, ‘but I believe I did speak to that purpose.’—‘And did Mr. Blifil order you to say so?’—‘I am sure, Sir, I should not have gone on my own accord, nor have willingly exceeded my authority, in matters of this kind. If I said so, I must have so understood Mr. Blifil’s instructions.’—‘Look you, Mr. Dowling,’ said Allworthy, ‘I promise you, before this lady, that whatever you have done in this affair, by Mr. Blifil’s order, I will forgive, provided you now tell me strictly the truth: for I believe what you say, that you would not have acted of your own accord, and without authority, in this matter. Mr. Blifil then, likewise sent you to examine the two fellows at Aldersgate?’—‘He did, Sir.’—‘Well; and what instructions did he then give you? Recollect as well as you can; and tell me, as near as possible, the very words he used.’—‘Why, Sir, Mr. Blifil sent me to find out the persons who were eye-witnesses of this fight. He said, he feared they might be tampered with by Mr. Jones, or some of his friends. He said, blood required blood; and that not only all who concealed a murder, but those who omitted any thing in their power, to bring him to justice, were sharers in his guilt. He

said, he found you was very desirous of having the villain brought to justice, though it was not proper you should appear in it.’—‘He did so?’ said Allworthy. ‘Yes, Sir;’ cries Dowling: ‘I should not, I am sure, have proceeded such lengths, for the sake of any other person living, but your worship.’—‘What lengths, Sir?’ said Allworthy. ‘Nay, Sir,’ cries Dowling, ‘I would not have your worship think I would, on any account, be guilty of subornation of perjury; but there are two ways of delivering evidence. I told them, therefore, that if any offers should be made them on the other side, they should refuse them; and that they might be assured, they should lose nothing by being honest men, and telling the truth. I said, we were told, that Mr. Jones had assaulted the gentleman first, and that, if that was the truth, they should declare it; and I did give them some hints, that they should be no losers.’—‘I think you went lengths, indeed!’ cries Allworthy. ‘Nay, Sir,’ answered Dowling, ‘I am sure I did not desire them to tell an untruth; nor should I have said what I did, unless it had been to oblige you.’—‘You would not have thought, I believe,’ says Allworthy, ‘to have obliged me, had you known that this Mr. Jones was my own nephew.’—‘I am sure, Sir,’ answered he, ‘it did not become me to take any notice, of what I thought you desired to conceal.’—‘How!’ cries Allworthy, ‘and did you know it then?’—‘Nay, Sir,’ answered Dowling, ‘if your worship bids me speak the truth, I am sure I shall do it. Indeed, Sir, I did know it; for they were almost the last words which Madam Blifil ever spoke, which she mentioned to me, as I stood alone by her bedside, when she delivered me the letter I brought your worship from her.’—‘What letter?’ cries Allworthy. ‘The letter, Sir,’ answered Dowling, ‘which I brought from Salisbury, and which I delivered into the hands of Mr. Blifil.’—‘O Heavens!’ cries Allworthy. ‘Well; and what were the words? What did my sister say to you?’—‘She took me by the hand,’ answered he; ‘and as she delivered me the letter, said, “I

"scarce know what I have written. Tell my brother, Mr. Jones is his nephew—He is my son—bless him!" says she, and then fell backward, as if dying away. I presently called in the people, and she never spoke more to me, and died within a few minutes afterwards." Allworthy stood a minute silent, lifting up his eyes; and then turning to Dowling, said—How came you, Sir, not to deliver me this message?—"Your worship," answered he, "must remember, that you was at that time ill in bed; and being in a violent hurry, as indeed I always am, I delivered the letter and message to Mr. Blifil, who told me, he would carry them both to you; which he hath since told me he did; and that your worship, partly out of friendship to Mr. Jones, and partly out of regard to your sister, would never have it mentioned; and did intend to conceal it from the world; and therefore, Sir, if you had not mentioned it to me first, I am certain I should never have thought it belonged to me to say any thing of the matter, either to your worship, or any other person."

We have remarked somewhere already, that it is possible for a man to convey a lie in the words of truth; this was the case at present: for Blifil had, in fact, told Dowling what he now related; but had not imposed upon him, nor, indeed, had imagined that he was able so to do. In reality, the promises which Blifil had made to Dowling, were the motives which had induced him to secrecy; and as he very plainly saw Blifil would not be able to keep them, he thought proper now to make this confession; which the promises of forgiveness, joined to the threats, the voice, the looks of Allworthy, and the discoveries he had made before, extorted from him, who was, besides, taken unawares, and had no time to consider of evasions.

Allworthy appeared well satisfied with this relation; and having enjoined on Dowling strict silence as to what had passed, conducted that gentleman himself to the door, lest he should see Blifil, who was returned to his chamber, where he exulted in the thoughts of his last deceit on his uncle, and little suspected what had since passed below stairs.

As Allworthy was returning to his room, he met Mrs. Miller in the entry; who, with a face all pale and full of terror, said to him, "O! Sir, I find this wicked woman hath been with you, and you know all; yet do not, on this account, abandon the poor young man. Consider, Sir, he was ignorant it was his own mother; and the discovery itself will, most probably, break his heart, without your unkindness."

"Madam," says Allworthy, "I am under such an astonishment at what I have heard, that I am really unable to satisfy you; but come with me into my room. Indeed, Mrs. Miller, I have made surprizing discoveries, and you shall soon know them."

The poor woman followed him trembling; and now Allworthy going up to Mrs. Waters, took her by the hand, and then turning to Mrs. Miller, said, "What reward shall I bestow upon this gentlewoman, for the services she hath done me?—O! Mrs. Miller, you have a thousand times heard me call the young man to whom you are so faithful a friend, my son. Little did I then think he was indeed related to me at all.—Your friend, Madam, is my nephew; he is the brother of that wicked viper whom I have so long nourished in my bosom!—She will herself tell you the whole story, and how the youth came to pass for her son. Indeed, Mrs. Miller, I am convinced that he hath been wronged, and that I have been abused; abused by one whom you too justly suspected of being a villain. He is, in truth, the worst of villains!"

The joy which Mrs. Miller now felt, bereft her of the power of speech, and might, perhaps, have deprived her of her senses, if not of life, had not a friendly shower of tears come seasonably to her relief. At length, recovering so far from her transport as to be able to speak, she cried, "And is my dear Mr. Jones, then, your nephew, Sir! and not the son of this lady! And are your eyes opened to him at last! And shall I live to see him as happy as he deserves!"—"He certainly is my nephew," says Allworthy, "and I hope all the rest."—"And is this dear good woman, the person," cries she, "to whom all this discovery

'is owing?'—'She is, indeed,' says Allworthy. 'Why then,' cried Mrs. Miller, upon her knees, 'may Heaven shower down it's choicest blessings upon her head; and, for this one good action, forgive her all her sins, be they never so many!'

Mrs. Waters then informed them, that she believed Jones would very shortly be released; for that the surgeon was gone, in company with a nobleman, to the justice who committed him, in order to certify that Mr. Fitzpatrick was out of all manner of danger, and to procure the prisoner his liberty.

Allworthy said, he should be glad to find his nephew there at his return home; but that he was then obliged to go on some business of consequence. He then called to a servant to fetch him a chair, and presently left the two ladies together.

Mr. Blifil, hearing the chair ordered, came down stairs to attend upon his uncle; for he never was deficient in such acts of duty. He asked his uncle if he was going out; which is a civil way of asking a man where he is going: to which the other making no answer, he again desired to know, when he would be pleased to return. Allworthy made no answer to this neither, till he was just getting into his chair, and then turning about, he said, 'Hark'e, Sir, do you find out, before my return, the letter which your mother sent me on her death-bed.' Allworthy then departed, and left Blifil in a situation to be envied only by a man who is just going to be hanged.

CHAP. IX.

A FARTHER CONTINUATION.

ALLWORTHY took an opportunity, whilst he was in the chair, of reading the letter from Jones to Sophia, which Western delivered him; and there were some expressions in it, concerning himself, which drew tears from his eyes. At length he arrived at Mr. Western's, and was introduced to Sophia.

When the first ceremonies were past, and the gentleman and lady had taken their chairs, a silence of some minutes ensued; during which, the latter, who

had been prepared for the visit by her father, sat playing with her fan, and had every mark of confusion both in her countenance and behaviour. At length, Allworthy, who was himself a little disconcerted, began thus: 'I am afraid, Miss Western, my family hath been the occasion of giving you some uneasiness; to which, I fear, I have innocently become more instrumental than I intended. Be assured, Madam, had I at first known how disagreeable the proposals had been, I should not have suffered you to have been so long persecuted. I hope, therefore, you will not think the design of this visit is to trouble you with any farther solicitations of that kind, but entirely to relieve you from them.'

Sir, said Sophia, with a little modest hesitation, 'this behaviour is most kind and generous, and such as I could expect only from Mr. Allworthy: but as you have been so kind to mention this matter, you will pardon me for saying it bath, indeed, given me great uneasiness; and hath been the occasion of my suffering much cruel treatment from a father, who was, till that unhappy affair, the tenderest and fondest of all parents. I am convinced, Sir, you are too good and generous to resent my refusal of your nephew. Our inclinations are not in our own power; and whatever may be his merit, I cannot force them in his favour.'—'I assure you, most amiable young lady,' said Allworthy, 'I am capable of no such resentment, had the person been my own son, and had I entertained the highest esteem for him. For you say truly, Madam, we cannot force our inclinations, much less can they be directed by another.'—'Oh! Sir,' answered Sophia, 'every word you speak proves you to deserve that good, that great, that benevolent character, the whole world allows you, I assure you, Sir, nothing less than the certain prospect of future misery could have made me resist the commands of my father.'—'I sincerely believe you, Madam,' replied Allworthy; 'and I heartily congratulate you on your prudent foresight, since, by so justifiable a resistance, you have avoided misery indeed.'—'You speak, now, —Mr.

‘Mr. Allworthy,’ cries she, ‘with a delicacy which few men are capable of feeling; but surely, in my opinion, to lead our lives with one to whom we are indifferent, must be a state of wretchedness. Perhaps, that wretchedness would be even increased by a sense of the merits of the object to whom we cannot give our affections. If I had married Mr. Blifil—’ Pardon my interrupting you, Madam,’ answered Allworthy, ‘but I cannot bear the supposition. Believe me, Miss Western, I rejoice from my heart—I rejoice in your escape. I have discovered the wretch, for whom you have suffered all this cruel violence from your father, to be a villain!’—‘How, Sir!’ cries Sophia, ‘you must believe this surprises me!’—‘It hath surprized me,’ Madam,’ answered Allworthy; ‘and so it will the world: but I have acquainted you with the real truth.’—‘Nothing but truth,’ says Sophia, ‘can, I am convinced, come from the lips of Mr. Allworthy. Yet, Sir, such sudden, such unexpected news—Discovered, you say—may villainy be ever so!’—‘You will soon enough hear the story,’ cries Allworthy, at present let us not mention so detested a name—I have another matter of a very serious nature to propose. O! Miss Western, I know your vast worth, nor can I so easily part with the ambition of being allied to it. I have a near relation, Madam, a young man whose character is, I am convinced, the very opposite to that of this wretch, and whose fortune I will make equal to what his was to have been. Could I, Madam, hope you would admit a visit from him?’ Sophia, after a minute’s silence, answered, ‘I will deal with the utmost sincerity with Mr. Allworthy. His character, and the obligation I have just received from him, demand it. I have determined at present to listen to no such proposals from any person. My only desire is, to be restored to the affection of my father, and to be again the mistress of his family. This, Sir, I hope to owe to your good offices. Let me beseech you, let me conjure you, by all the goodness which I, and all who know you, have experienced; do not, the very moment when you have re-

leased me from one persecution, do not engage me in another, as miserable and as fruitless!’—‘Indeed,’ Miss Western,’ replied Allworthy, ‘I am capable of no such conduct; and if this be your resolution, he must submit to the disappointment, whatever torments he may suffer under it.’—‘I must smile now, Mr. Allworthy,’ answered Sophia, ‘when you mention the torments of a man whom I do not know, and who can consequently have so little acquaintance with me.’—‘Pardon me, dear young lady,’ cries Allworthy, ‘I begin now to be afraid he hath had too much acquaintance for the repose of his future days; since, if ever man was capable of a sincere, violent, and noble passion, such, I am convinced, is my unhappy nephew’s for Miss Western.’—‘A nephew of yours!’ Mr. Allworthy,’ answered Sophia. ‘It is surely strange, I never heard of him before!’—‘Indeed,’ Madam,’ cries Allworthy, ‘it is only the circumstance of his being my nephew to which you are a stranger, and which, till this day, was a secret to me. Mr. Jones, who has long loved you, he! he is my nephew!’—‘Mr. Jones your nephew, Sir?’ cries Sophia; ‘can it be possible?’—‘He is indeed,’ Madam,’ answered Allworthy: ‘he is my own sister’s son—as such I shall always own him; nor am I ashamed of owning him: I am much more ashamed of my past behaviour to him; but I was as ignorant of his merit as of his birth. Indeed, Miss Western, I have used him cruelly—indeed I have!’ Here the good man wiped his eyes, and after a short pause proceeded. ‘I never shall be able to reward him for his sufferings, without your assistance. Believe me, most amiable young lady, I must have a great esteem of that offering which I make to your worth. I know he hath been guilty of faults; but there is great goodness of heart at the bottom. Believe me, Madam, there is.’ Here he stopped, seeming to expect an answer, which he presently received from Sophia, after she had a little recovered herself from the hurry of spirits into which so strange and sudden information had thrown her: ‘I sincerely wish you joy, Sir, of a discovery in which you

' you seem to have such satisfaction.
 ' I doubt not but you will have all the
 ' comfort you can promise yourself
 ' from it. The young gentleman hath
 ' certainly a thousand good qualities,
 ' which makes it impossible he should
 ' not behave well to such an uncle.—
 ' I hope, Madam,' said Allworthy,
 ' he hath those good qualities which
 ' must make him a good husband. He
 ' must, I am sure, be of all men the
 ' most abandoned, if a lady of your
 ' merit should condescend.—' You
 ' must pardon me, Mr. Allworthy,'
 answered Sophia. ' I cannot listen to
 ' a proposal of this kind. Mr. Jones,
 ' I am convinced, hath much merit;
 ' but I shall never receive Mr. Jones
 ' as one who is to be my husband—
 ' upon my honour, I never will.—
 ' Pardon me, Madam,' cries Allwor-
 thy, ' if I am a little surprized, latter
 ' what I have heard from Mr. Wes-
 tern—I hope the unhappy young man
 ' hath done nothing to forfeit your
 ' good opinion, if he had ever the ho-
 ' nour to enjoy it. Perhaps he may
 ' have been misrepresented to you, as
 ' he was to me. The same villainy
 ' may have injured him every where.
 ' He is no murderer, I assure you, as
 ' he hath been called.—' Mr. All-
 worthy,' answered Sophia, ' I have
 ' told you my resolution. I wonder
 ' not at what my father hath told you;
 ' but whatever his apprehensions or
 ' fears have been, if I know my heart,
 ' I have given no occasion for them;
 ' since it hath always been a fixed prin-
 ' ciple with me, never to have married
 ' without his consent. This is, ' I
 ' think, the duty of a child to a pa-
 ' rent; and this, I hope, nothing
 ' could ever have prevailed with me
 ' to swerve from.—I do not, indeed,
 ' conceive, that the authority of any
 ' parent can oblige us to marry, in
 ' direct opposition to our inclinations.
 ' To avoid a force of this kind, which
 ' I had reason to suspect, I left my fa-
 ' ther's house, and sought protection
 ' elsewhere. This is the truth of my
 ' story; and if the world, or my fa-
 ' ther, carry my intentions any far-
 ' ther, my own conscience will acquit
 ' me.—' I hear you, Miss Western,'
 cries Allworthy, ' with admiration. I
 ' admire the justness of your senti-
 ' ments; but surely there is more in
 ' this, ' I am cautious of offending

' you, young lady; but am I to look
 ' on all which I have hitherto heard or
 ' seen, as a dream only? And have
 ' you suffered so much cruelty from
 ' your father on the account of a man
 ' to whom you have been always abso-
 ' lutely indifferent?—' I beg, Mr.
 ' Allworthy,' answered Sophia, ' you
 ' will not insist on my reasons: yes, I
 ' have suffered indeed! I will not, Mr.
 ' Allworthy, conceal—I will be very
 ' sincere with you—I own I had a
 ' great opinion of Mr. Jones—I be-
 ' lieve—I know I have suffered for my
 ' opinion—I have been treated cruelly
 ' by my aunt, as well as by my father;
 ' but that is now past—I beg I may
 ' not be farther pressed; for whatever
 ' hath been, my resolution is now fixed.
 ' Your nephew, Sir, hath many vir-
 ' tues—he hath great virtues, Mr.
 ' Allworthy. I question not but he
 ' will do you honour in the world, and
 ' make you happy.—' I wish I could
 ' make him so, Madam,' replied All-
 worthy; ' but that, I am convinced, is
 ' only in your power. It is that con-
 ' viction which hath made me so earnest
 ' a solicitor in his favour.—' You are
 ' deceived; indeed, Sir, you are de-
 ' ceived,' said Sophia; ' I hope not by
 ' him—it is sufficient to have deceiv-
 ' ed me. Mr. Allworthy, I must in-
 ' sist on being pressed no farther on this
 ' subject. I should be sorry—nay, I
 ' will not injure him in your favour, I
 ' wish Mr. Jones very well. I sincerely
 ' wish him well; and I repeat it again
 ' to you, whatever demerit he may
 ' have to me, I am certain he hath
 ' many good qualities. I do not dis-
 ' own my former thoughts; but no-
 ' thing can ever recal them. At pre-
 ' sent, there is not a man upon earth
 ' whom I would more resolutely re-
 ' ject than Mr. Jones; nor would the
 ' addresses of Mr. Blifil himself be
 ' less agreeable to me.

Western had been long impatient for
 the event of this conference, and was
 just now arrived at the door to listen;
 when having heard the last sentiments
 of his daughter's heart, he lost all tem-
 per, and bursting open the door in a
 rage, cried out, ' It is a lye: it is a
 ' d—n'd lye! It is all owing to that
 ' d—n'd rascal Jones; and if he
 ' could get at un, she'd ha' un any
 ' hour of the day.' Here Allworthy
 interposed, and addressing himself to
 the

the squire with some anger in his look, he said, 'Mr. Western, you have not kept your word with me. You promised to abstain from all violence.'—'Why so I did,' cries Western, 'as long as it was possible; but to hear a wench telling such confounded lies. Zounds! doth she think if she can make vools of other folk, she can make one of me? No, no, I know her better than thee dost.'—'I am sorry to tell you, Sir,' answered Allworthy, 'it doth not appear by your behaviour to this young lady, that you know her at all. I ask pardon for what I say; but I think our intimacy, your own desires, and the occasion, justify me. She is your daughter, Mr. Western, and I think she doth honour to your name.' If I was capable of envy, I should sooner envy you on this account, than any other man whatever.'—'Od-rabbit it,' cries the squire, 'I wish she was thine with all my heart—would soon be glad to be rid of the trouble o' her.'—'Indeed, my good friend,' answered Allworthy, 'you yourself are the cause of all the trouble you complain of. Place that confidence in the young lady which she so well deserves, and I am certain you will be the happiest father on earth.'—'I confidence in her!' cries the squire. 'Sblood! what confidence can I place in her, when she won't do as I would ha' her? Let her gee but her consent to marry as I would ha' her, and I'll place as much confidence in her as wouldst ha' me.'—'You have no right, neighbour,' answered Allworthy, 'to insist on any such consent. A negative voice your daughter allows you; and God and nature have thought proper to allow you no more.'—'A negative voice!' cries the squire: 'Ay! ay! I'll shew you what a negative voice I ha'.—Go along, go into your chamber; go, you stub-born—' 'Indeed, Mr. Western,' said Allworthy, 'indeed, you use her cruelly—I cannot bear to see this—' 'You shall, you must behave to her in a kinder manner. She deserves the best of treatment.'—'Yes, yes,' said the squire; 'I know what she deserves: now she's gone, I'll shew you what she deserves—See here, Sir, here is a letter from my cousin my Lady Bellafton, in which she is so

'kind to gee me to understand, that the fellow is got out of prison again; and here she advises me to take all the care I can o' the wench. Od-zookers! neighbour Allworthy, you don't know what it is to govern a daughter!'

The squire ended his speech with some compliments to his own sagacity; and then Allworthy, after a formal preface, acquainted him with the whole discovery which he had made concerning Jones, with his anger to Blifil, and with every particular which hath been disclosed to the reader in the preceding chapters.

Men over-violent in their dispositions, are, for the most part, as changeable in them. No sooner, then, was Western informed of Mr. Allworthy's intention to make Jones his heir, than he joined heartily with the uncle in every commendation of the nephew, and became as eager for her marriage with Jones, as he had before been to couple her to Blifil.

Here Mr. Allworthy was again forced to interpose, and to relate what had passed between him and Sophia; at which he testified great surprise.

The squire was silent a moment, and looked wild with astonishment at this account. At last he cried out, 'Why, what can be the meaning of this, neighbour Allworthy? Vond o' un she was, that I'll be sworn to.—Od-zookers! I have hit o't. As sure as a gun, I have hit o' the very right o't. It's all along o' sister. The girl hath got a hankering after this son of a whore of a lord. I vound 'em together at my cousin, my Lady Bellafton's. He hath turned the head o' her, that's certain—but, d—n me, if he shall ha' her. I'll ha' no lords nor courtiers in my family.'

Allworthy now made a long speech, in which he repeated his resolution to avoid all violent measures; and very earnestly recommended gentle methods to Mr. Western, as those by which he might be assured of succeeding best with his daughter. He then took his leave, and returned back to Mrs. Miller, but was forced to comply with the earnest entreaties of the squire, in promising to bring Mr. Jones to visit him that afternoon, that he might, as he said, make all matters up with the young gentleman. At Mr. Allworthy's

thy's departure, Western promised to follow his advice, in his behaviour to Sophia; saying, 'I don't know how 'tis; but, d—n me, Allworthy, if you don't make me always do just as you please; and yet I have as good an estate as you, and am in the commission of the peace as well as yourself.'

CHAP. X.

WHEREIN THE HISTORY BEGINS
TO DRAW TOWARDS A CONCLUSION.

WHEN Allworthy returned to his lodgings, he heard Mr. Jones was just arrived before him. He hurried, therefore, instantly into an empty chamber, whither he ordered Mr. Jones to be brought to him alone. It is impossible to conceive a more tender, moving scene, than the meeting between the uncle and nephew, (for Mrs. Waters, as the reader may well suppose, had, at their last visit, discovered to him the secret of his birth.) The first agonies of joy which were felt on both sides, are indeed beyond my power to describe: I shall not, therefore, attempt it. After Allworthy had raised Jones from his feet, where he had prostrated himself, and received him into his arms, 'O my child,' he cried, 'how have I been to blame! how have I injured you! What amends can I ever make you, for those unkind, those unjust suspicions, which I have entertained; and for all the sufferings they have occasioned to you?' — 'Am I not now made amends?' cries Jones: 'Would not my sufferings, if they had been ten times greater, have been now richly repaid? O, my dear uncle! this goodness, this tenderness, overpowers, unmans, destroys me! I cannot bear the transports which flow so fast upon me. To be again restored to your presence, to your favour; to be once more thus kindly received, by my great, my noble, my generous benefactor—' 'Indeed, child,' cries Allworthy, 'I have used you cruelly.' He then explained to him all the treachery of Blifil; and again repeated expressions of the utmost concern, for having been induced by that treachery to use him so ill. 'O, talk not so!

answered Jones: 'Indeed, Sir, you have used me nobly. The wisest man might be deceived as you were; and, under such a deception, the best must have acted just as you did. Your goodness displayed itself in the midst of your anger, just as it then seemed. I owe every thing to that goodness of which I have been most unworthy. Do not put me on self-accusation, by carrying your generous sentiments too far. Alas! Sir, I have not been punished more than I have deserved; and it shall be the whole business of my future life, to deserve that happiness you now bestow on me; for, believe me, my dear uncle, my punishment hath not been thrown away upon me: though I have been a great, I am not a hardened sinner; I thank Heaven, I have had time to reflect on my past life; where, though I cannot charge myself with any gross villainy, yet I can discern follies and vices more than enough to repent and to be ashamed of; follies which have been attended with dreadful consequences to myself, and have brought me to the brink of destruction. — I am rejoiced, my dear child,' answered Allworthy, 'to hear you talk thus sensibly; for as I am convinced hypocrisy (good Heaven, how have I been imposed on by it in others!) was never among your faults; so I can readily believe all you say. You now see, Tom, to what dangers imprudence alone may subject virtue (for virtue, I am now convinced, you love in a great degree.) Prudence is, indeed, the duty which we owe to ourselves; and if we will be so much our own enemies as to neglect it, we are not to wonder if the world is deficient in discharging their duty to us; for, when a man lays the foundation of his own ruin, others will, I am afraid, be too apt to build upon it. You say, however, you have seen your errors, and will reform them. I firmly believe you, my dear child; and therefore, from this moment, you shall never more be reminded of them by me. Remember them only yourself, so far, as for the future to teach you the better to avoid them; but still remember, for your comfort, that there is this great difference between those faults which candour may convert into imprudence, and those which can be deduced from villainy

only. The former, perhaps, are even more apt to subject a man to ruin; but if he reform, his character will, at length, be totally retrieved; the world, though not immediately, will, in time, be reconciled to him; and he may reflect, not without some mixture of pleasure, on the dangers he hath escaped: but villainy, my boy, when once discovered, is irretrievable; the stains which this leaves behind, no time will wash away. The censures of mankind will pursue the wretch; their scorn will abash him in publick; and if shame drives him into retirement, he will go to it with all those terrors with which a weary child, who is afraid of hobgoblins, retreats from company to go to bed alone. Here his murdered conscience will haunt him; repose, like a false friend, will fly from him; wherever he turns his eyes, horror presents itself. If he looks backward, unavailable repentance treads on his heel; if forward, incurable despair stares him in the face; till, like a condemned prisoner, confined in a dungeon, he detests his present condition, and yet dreads the consequence of that hour which is to relieve him from it. Comfort yourself, I say, my child, that this is not your case; and rejoice, with thankfulness, to Him who hath suffered you to see your errors, before they have brought on you that destruction, to which a persistence in even those errors must have led you. You have deserted them; and the prospect now before you is such, that happiness seems in your own power.—

At these words, Jones fetched a deep sigh; upon which, when Allworthy remonstrated, he said, 'Sir, I will conceal nothing from you: I fear, there is one consequence of my vices I shall never be able to retrieve. O my dear uncle, I have lost a treasure!'—'You need say no more,' answered Allworthy; 'I will be explicit with you; I know what you lament; I have seen the young lady, and have discoursed with her concerning you. This I must insist on, as an earnest of your sincerity in all you have said, and of the steadfastness of your resolution, that you obey me in one instance—to abide entirely by the determination of the young lady, whether it shall be in your favour or

no. She hath already suffered enough from solicitations which I hate to think of; she shall owe no farther constraint to my family: I know her father will be as ready to torment her now on your account, as he hath formerly been on another's; but I am determined she shall suffer no more confinement, no more violence, no more uneasy hours.'—'O my dear uncle!' answered Jones, 'lay, I beseech you, some command on me, in which I shall have some merit in obedience. Believe me, Sir, the only instance in which I could disobey you, would be to give an uneasy moment to my Sophia. No, Sir, if I am so miserable to have incurred her displeasure beyond all hope of forgiveness, that alone, with the dreadful reflection of causing her misery, will be sufficient to overpower me. To call Sophia mine, is the greatest, and now the only additional blessing which Heaven can bestow; but it is a blessing which I must owe to her alone.'—'I will not flatter you, child,' cries Allworthy; 'I fear your case is desperate: I never saw stronger marks of an unalterable resolution in any person, than appeared in her vehement declarations against receiving your addresses; for which, perhaps, you can account better than myself.'—'Oh, Sir! I can account too well,' answered Jones; 'I have sinned against her beyond all hope of pardon; and, guilty as I am, my guilt unfortunately appears to her in ten times blacker than the real colours. O my dear uncle! I find my follies are irretrievable; and all your goodness cannot save me from perdition!'

A servant now acquainted them, that Mr. Western was below stairs; for his eagerness to see Jones could not wait till the afternoon. Upon which Jones, whose eyes were full of tears, begged his uncle to entertain Western a few minutes, till he a little recovered himself: to which the good man consented; and having ordered Mr. Western to be shewn into a parlour, went down to him.

Mrs. Miller no sooner heard that Jones was alone, (for she had not yet seen him since his release from prison) than she came eagerly into the room; and advancing towards Jones, wished him heartily joy of his new-found
uncle,

uncle; and his happy reconciliation; adding, 'I wish I could give you joy on another account, my dear child; but any thing so inexorable I never saw!'

Jones, with some appearance of surprise, asked her what she meant. 'Why then,' says she, 'I have been with your young lady, and have explained all matters to her, as they were told me by my son Nightingale. She can have no longer any doubt about the letter, that I am certain; for I told her, my son Nightingale was ready to take his oath, if she pleased, that it was all his own invention, and the letter of his inditing. I told her, the very reason of sending the letter ought to recommend you to her the more; as it was all upon her account, and a plain proof, that you was resolved to quit your profligacy for the future; that you had never been guilty of a single instance of infidelity to her since your seeing her in town. I am afraid I went too far there; but Heaven forgive me! I hope your future behaviour will be my justification. I am sure, I have said all I can; but all to no purpose. She remains inflexible. She says, she had forgiven many faults on account of youth; but expressed such detestation of the character of a libertine, that she absolutely silenced me. I often attempted to excuse you; but the justness of her accusation flew in my face. Upon my honour, she is a lovely woman, and one of the sweetest and most sensible creatures I ever saw! I could have almost kissed her, for one expression she made use of. It was a sentiment worthy of Seneca, or of a bishop. "I once fancied, Madam," said she, "I had discovered great goodness of heart in Mr. Jones; and for that, I own, I had a sincere esteem; but an entire profligacy of manners will corrupt the best heart in the world; and all which a good-natured libertine can expect, is, that we should mix some grains of pity with our contempt and abhorrence." She is an angel-lick creature, that is the truth on't!'

—'O Mrs. Miller,' answered Jones, 'can I bear to think I have lost such an angel!'

—'Lost! no,' cries Mrs. Miller; 'I hope you have not lost her yet. Resolve to leave such vicious courses, and you may yet have hopes:

'nay, if she should remain inexorable, there is another young lady, a sweet pretty young lady, and a twingeing fortune, who is absolutely dying for love of you. I heard of it this very morning, and I told it to Miss Western: nay, I went a little beyond the truth again; for I told her, you had refused her; but, indeed, I knew you would refuse her. And here I must give you a little comfort: when I mentioned the young lady's name, who is no other than the pretty widow Hunt, I thought she turned pale; but when I said you had refused her, I will be sworn, her face was all over scarlet in an instant; and these were her very words: "I will not deny but that I believe he has some affection for me."

Here the conversation was interrupted by the arrival of Western, who could no longer be kept out of the room, even by the authority of Allworthy himself; though this, as we have often seen, had a wonderful power over him.

Western immediately went up to Jones, crying out, 'My old friend Tom, I am glad to see thee with all my heart. All past must be forgotten. I could not intend any affront to thee, because, as Allworthy here knows, nay, dost know it thyself, I took thee for another person; and where a body means no harm, what signifies a hasty word or two? one christian must forget and forgive another.'—'I hope, Sir,' said Jones, 'I shall never forget the many obligations I have had to you; but as for any offence towards me, I declare I am an utter stranger.'—'A't?' says Western; 'then give me thy fist; a't as hearty an honest cock as any in the kingdom. Come along with me; I'll carry thee to thy mistress this moment.' Here Allworthy interposed; and the squire being unable to prevail either with the uncle or nephew, was, after some litigation, obliged to consent to delay introducing Jones to Sophia till the afternoon; at which time Allworthy, as well in compassion to Jones, as in compliance with the eager desires of Western, was prevailed upon to promise to attend at the tea-table.

The conversation which now ensued was pleasant enough; and with which,

had it happened earlier in our history, we would have entertained our reader; but as we have now leisure only to attend to what is very material, it shall suffice to say, that matters being entirely adjusted as to the afternoon visit, Mr. Western again returned home.

CHAP. XI.

THE HISTORY DRAWS NEARER TO A CONCLUSION.

WHEN Mr. Western was departed, Jones began to inform Mr. Allworthy and Mrs. Miller, that his liberty had been procured by two noble lords; who, together with two surgeons, and a friend of Mr. Nightingale's, had attended the magistrate by whom he had been committed, and by whom, on the surgeon's oath that the wounded person was out of all manner of danger from his wound, he was discharged.

One only of these lords, he said, he had ever seen before, and that no more than once; but the other had greatly surprized him, by asking his pardon for an offence he had been guilty of towards him, occasioned, he said, entirely by his ignorance who he was.

Now the reality of the case, with which Jones was not acquainted till afterwards, was this: the lieutenant whom Lord Fellamar had employed, according to the advice of Lady Belaston, to press Jones, as a vagabond, into the sea-service, when he came to report to his lordship the event which we have before seen, spoke very favourably of the behaviour of Mr. Jones on all accounts; and strongly assured that lord, that he must have mistaken the person; for that Jones was certainly a gentleman: inasmuch that his lordship, who was strictly a man of honour, and would by no means have been guilty of an action which the world in general would have condemned, began to be much concerned for the advice which he had taken.

Within a day or two after this, Lord Fellamar happened to dine with the Irish peer, who, in a conversation upon the duel, acquainted his company with the character of Fitzpatrick; to which, indeed, he did not do strict justice, especially in what related to

his lady. He said, she was the most innocent, and most injured woman alive, and that from compassion alone he had undertaken her cause. He then declared an intention of going the next morning to Fitzpatrick's lodgings, in order to prevail with him, if possible, to consent to a separation from his wife; who, the peer said, was in apprehensions for her life, if she should ever return to be under the power of her husband. Lord Fellamar agreed to go with him, that he might satisfy himself more concerning Jones, and the circumstances of the duel; for he was by no means easy concerning the part he had acted. The moment his lordship gave a hint of his readiness to assist in the delivery of the lady, it was eagerly embraced by the other nobleman, who depended much on the authority of Lord Fellamar; as he thought it would greatly contribute to awe Fitzpatrick into a compliance; and, perhaps, he was in the right: for the poor Irishman no sooner saw these noble peers had undertaken the cause of his wife, than he submitted; and articles of separation were soon drawn up and signed between the parties.

Fitzpatrick had been so well satisfied by Mrs. Waters, concerning the innocence of his wife with Jones at Upton, or, perhaps, from some other reasons, was now become so indifferent to that matter, that he spoke highly in favour of Jones, to Lord Fellamar, took all the blame upon himself, and said the other had behaved very much like a gentleman, and a man of honour; and upon that lord's farther enquiry concerning Mr. Jones, Fitzpatrick told him he was nephew to a gentleman of very great fashion and fortune, which was the account he had just received from Mrs. Waters, after her interview with Dowling.

Lord Fellamar now thought it behoved him to do every thing in his power to make satisfaction to a gentleman whom he had so grossly injured; and without any consideration of rivalry (for he had now given over all thoughts of Sophia) determined to procure Mr. Jones's liberty; being satisfied, as well from Fitzpatrick as his surgeon, that the wound was not mortal. He therefore prevailed with the Irish peer to accompany him

to the place where Jones was confined; to whom he behaved as we have already related.

When Allworthy returned to his lodgings, he immediately carried Jones into his room, and then acquainted him with the whole matter, as well what he had heard from Mrs. Waters, as what he had discovered from Mr. Dowling.

Jones expressed great astonishment, and no less concern at this account, but without making any comment or observation upon it. And now a message was brought from Mr. Blifil, desiring to know if his uncle was at leisure, that he might wait upon him. Allworthy started, and turned pale; and then, in a more passionate tone than I believe he had ever used before, bid the servant tell Blifil, he knew him not. 'Consider, dear Sir,' cries Jones, in a trembling voice. 'I have considered,' answered Allworthy; 'and you yourself shall carry my message to the villain. No one can carry him the sentence of his own ruin, so properly as the man whose ruin he hath so villainously contrived.'—'Pardon me, dear Sir,' said Jones; 'a moment's reflection will, I am sure, convince you of the contrary. What might, perhaps, be but justice from another tongue, would from mine be insult! And to whom?—my own brother, and your nephew. Nor did he use me so barbarously. Indeed, that would have been more inexcusable than any thing he hath done. Fortune may tempt men of no very bad dispositions to injustice; but insults proceed only from black and rancorous minds, and have no temptations to excuse them. Let me beseech you, Sir, to do nothing by him in the present height of your anger. Consider, my dear uncle, I was not myself condemned unheard.' Allworthy stood silent a moment, and then embracing Jones, he said, with tears gushing from his eyes, 'O my child! to what goodness have I been so long blind!'

Mrs. Miller entering the room at that moment, after a gentle rap, which was not perceived, and seeing Jones in the arms of his uncle, the poor woman, in an agony of joy, fell upon her knees, and burst forth into the most extatick thanksgiving to Heaven

for what had happened. Then running to Jones, she embraced him eagerly, crying, 'My dearest friend, I wish you joy a thousand and a thousand times of this blessed day!' and next Mr. Allworthy himself received the same congratulations. To which he answered, 'Indeed, indeed, Mrs. Miller, I am beyond expression happy.' Some few more raptures having passed on all sides, Mrs. Miller desired them both to walk down to dinner in the parlour, where she said there were a very happy set of people assembled; being, indeed, no other than Mr. Nightingale and his bride, and his cousin Harris with her bridegroom.

Allworthy excused himself from dining with the company, saying, he had ordered some little thing for him and his nephew in his own apartment; for that they had much private business to discourse of, but could not resist promising the good woman, that both he and Jones would make part of her society at supper.

Mrs. Miller then asked what was to be done with Blifil: 'For, indeed,' says she, 'I cannot be easy while such a villain is in my house.' Allworthy answered, he was as uneasy as herself on the same account. 'O!' cries she, 'if that be the case, leave the matter to me; I'll soon shew him the outside of my doors, I warrant you! Here are two or three lusty fellows below stairs.'—'There will be no need of any violence,' cries Allworthy; 'if you will carry him a message from me, he will, I am convinced, depart of his own accord.'—'Will I?' said Mrs. Miller. 'I never did any thing in my life with a better will.' Here Jones interfered, and said, he had considered the matter better, and would, if Mr. Allworthy pleased, be himself the messenger. 'I know,' says he, 'already enough of your pleasure, Sir, and I beg leave to acquaint him with it by my own words. Let me beseech you, Sir,' added he, 'to reflect on the dreadful consequences of driving him to violent and sudden despair. How unfit, alas! is this poor man to die in his present situation!' This suggestion had not the least effect on Mrs. Miller. She left the room, crying, 'You are too good, Mr. Jones, infinitely too good to live in this world.' But it made a deeper impression on Allworthy,

Allworthy. 'My good child,' said he, 'I am equally astonished at the goodness of your heart, and the quickness of your understanding. Heaven, indeed, forbid, that this wretch should be deprived of any means or time for repentance: that would be a shocking consideration indeed! Go to him, therefore, and use your own discretion; yet do not flatter him with any hopes of my forgiveness; for I shall never forgive villainy farther than my religion obliges me, and that extends not either to our bounty or our conversation.'

Jones went up to Blifil's room, whom he found in a situation which moved his pity, though it would have raised a less amiable passion in many beholders. He cast himself on his bed, where he lay abandoning himself to despair, and drowned in tears: not in such tears as flow from contrition, and wash away guilt from minds which have been seduced or surprized into it unawares, against the bent of their natural dispositions, as will sometimes happen from human frailty, even to the good; no, these tears were such as the frightened thief sheds in his cart, and are, indeed, the effects of that concern which the most savage natures are seldom deficient in feeling for themselves.

It would be unpleasant and tedious to paint this scene in full length. Let it suffice to say, that the behaviour of Jones was kind to excess. He omitted nothing which his invention could supply, to raise and comfort the drooping spirits of Blifil, before he communicated to him the resolution of his uncle, that he must quit the house that evening. He offered to furnish him with any money he wanted; assured him of his hearty forgiveness of all he had done against him; that he would endeavour to live with him hereafter as a brother; and would leave nothing unattempted, to effectuate a reconciliation with his uncle.

Blifil was at first sullen and silent, balancing in his mind whether he should yet deny all; but finding at last the evidence too strong against him, he betook himself at last to confession. He then asked pardon of his brother in the most vehement manner, prostrated himself on the ground, and kissed his feet: in short, he was now as remark-

ably mean, as he had been before remarkably wicked.

Jones could not so far check his disdain, but that it a little discovered itself in his countenance at this extreme servility. He raised his brother the moment he could from the ground, and advised him to bear his afflictions more like a man; repeating, at the same time, his promises, that he would do all in his power to lessen them: for which Blifil, making many professions of his unworthiness, poured forth a profusion of thanks; and then, he having declared he would immediately depart to another lodging, Jones returned to his uncle.

Among other matters, Allworthy now acquainted Jones with the discovery which he made concerning the 500l. bank-notes. 'I have,' said he, 'already consulted a lawyer, who tells me, to my great astonishment, that there is no punishment for a fraud of this kind. Indeed, when I consider the black ingratitude of this fellow towards you, I think a highwayman, compared to him, is an innocent person.'

'Good Heaven!' says Jones, 'is it possible! I am shocked beyond measure at this news. I thought there was not an honest fellow in the world. The temptation of such a sum was too great for him to withstand; for smaller matters have come safe to me through his hand. Indeed, my dear uncle, you must suffer me to call it weakness rather than ingratitude; for I am convinced the poor fellow loves me, and hath done me some kindnesses, which I can never forget; nay, I believe he hath repented of this very act: for it is not above a day or two ago, when my affairs seemed in a most desperate situation, that he visited me in my confinement, and offered me any money I wanted. Consider, Sir, what a temptation to a man, who hath tasted such bitter distress, it must be, to have a sum in his possession, which must put him and his family beyond any future possibility of suffering the like.'

'Child,' cries Allworthy, 'you carry this forgiving temper too far. Such mistaken mercy is not only weakness, but borders on injustice, and is very pernicious to society, as it

it encourages vice. The dishonesty of this fellow, I might, perhaps, have pardoned, but never his ingratitude: and give me leave to say, when we suffer any temptation to atone for dishonesty itself, we are as candid and merciful as we ought to be: and so far I confess I have gone; for I have often pitied the fate of a highwayman, when I have been on the grand jury; and have more than once applied to the judge, on the behalf of such as have had any mitigating circumstances in their case; but when dishonesty is attended with any blacker crime, such as cruelty, murder, ingratitude, or the like, compassion and forgiveness then become faults. I am convinced the fellow is a villain, and he shall be punished; at least, as far as I can punish him.

This was spoke with so stern a voice, that Jones did not think proper to make any reply: besides, the hour appointed by Mr. Western, now drew so near, that he had barely time left to dress himself. Here, therefore, ended the present dialogue, and Jones retired to another room, where Partridge attended, according to order, with his cloaths.

Partridge had scarce seen his master since the happy discovery. The poor fellow was unable either to contain or express his transports. He behaved like one frantick, and made almost as many mistakes, while he was dressing Jones, as I have seen made by harlequin, in dressing himself on the stage.

His memory, however, was not in the least deficient. He recollected now many omens and presages of this happy event, some of which he had remarked at the time, but many more he now remembered; nor did he omit the dreams he had dreamed the evening before his meeting with Jones; and concluded with saying, 'I always told your honour, something boded in my mind, that you would one time or another, have it in your power to make my fortune.' Jones assured him, that this boding should as certainly be verified, with regard to him, as all the other omens had been to himself; which did not a little add to all the raptures which the poor fellow had already conceived on account of his master.

C H A P. XII.

APPROACHING STILL NEARER TO THE END.

JONES being now compleatly dressed, attended his uncle to Mr. Western's. He was, indeed, one of the finest figures ever beheld, and his person alone would have charmed the greater part of womankind; but we hope it hath already appeared in this history, that Nature, when she formed him, did not totally rely, as she sometimes doth, on this merit only to recommend her work.

Sophia, who, angry as she was, was likewise set forth to the best advantage, for which I leave my female readers to account, appeared so extremely beautiful, that even Allworthy, when he saw her, could not forbear whispering Western, that he believed she was the finest creature in the world. To which Western answered, in a whisper, overheard by all present, 'So much the better for Tom; for d—n me, if he shan't ha' the touzling her.' Sophia was all over scarlet at these words, while Tom's countenance was altogether as pale, and he was almost ready to sink from his chair.

The tea-table was scarce removed, before Western lugged Allworthy out of the room, telling him, he had business of consequence to impart, and must speak to him that instant in private, before he forgot it.

The lovers were now alone, and it will, I question not, appear strange to many readers, that those who had so much to say to one another, when danger and difficulty attended their conversation; and who seemed so eager to rush into each other's arms, when so many bars lay in their way, now that with safety they were at liberty to say or do whatever they pleased, should both remain for some time silent and motionless; insomuch, that a stranger of moderate sagacity, might have well concluded they were mutually indifferent: but so it was, however strange it may seem, both sat with their eyes cast downwards on the ground, and for some minutes continued in perfect silence.

Mr. Jones, during this interval, attempted

tempted once or twice to speak, but was absolutely incapable, muttering only, or rather sighing out, some broken words; when Sophia, at length, partly out of pity to him, and partly to turn the discourse from the subject which she knew well enough he was endeavouring to open, said:

'Sure, Sir, you are the most fortunate man in the world, in this discovery.'—'And can you really, Madam, think me so fortunate,' said Jones, sighing, 'while I have incurred your displeasure?'—'Nay, Sir,' says she, 'as to that, you best know whether you have deserved it.'—'Indeed, Madam,' answered he, 'you yourself are as well apprized of all my demerits. Mrs. Miller has acquainted you with the whole truth. O my Sophia! am I never to hope for forgiveness?'—'I think, Mr. Jones,' said she, 'I may almost depend on your own justice, and leave it to yourself to pass sentence on your own conduct.'—'Alas, Madam!' answered he, 'it is mercy, and not justice, which I implore at your hands. Justice, I know, must condemn me—yet, not for the letter I sent to Lady Bellafton: of that, I most solemnly declare, you have had a true account.' He then insisted much on the security given him by Nightingale, of a fair pretence for breaking off, if, contrary to their expectations, her ladyship should have accepted his offer; but confessed, that he had been guilty of a great indiscretion, to put such a letter as that into her power; 'which,' said he, 'I have dearly paid for, in the effect it has upon you!'—'I do not, I cannot,' says she, 'believe otherwise of that letter, than you would have me. My conduct, I think, shews you clearly I do not believe there is much in that: and yet, Mr. Jones, have I not enough to resent? After what passed at Upton, so soon to engage in a new amour with another woman, while I fancied, and you pretended, your heart was bleeding for me! Indeed, you have acted strangely. Can I believe the passion you have professed to me, to be sincere? or, if I can, what happiness can I assure myself of, with a man capable of so much inconstancy?'—'O my Sophia!' cries he, 'do not doubt the

sincerity of the purest passion that ever inflamed a human breast. Think, most adorable creature, of my unhappy situation, of my despair!—Could I, my Sophia, have flattered myself with the most distant hopes of being ever permitted to throw myself at your feet, in the manner I do now, it would not have been in the power of any other woman, to have inspired a thought which the severest chastity could have condemned. Inconstancy to you! O Sophia, if you can have goodness enough to pardon what is past, do not let any future cruel apprehensions shut your mercy against me! No repentance was ever more sincere. O! let it reconcile me to my heaven, in this dear bosom.'—'Sincere repentance,' Mr. Jones, answered she, 'will obtain the pardon of a sinner, but it is from One who is a perfect judge of that sincerity. A human mind may be imposed on; nor is there any infallible method to prevent it. You must expect, however, that if I can be prevailed on, by your repentance, to pardon you, I will, at least, insist on the strongest proof of its sincerity.'—'O! name any proof in my power,' answered Jones, eagerly. 'Time,' replied she, 'time alone, Mr. Jones, can convince me that you are a true penitent, and have resolved to abandon these vicious courses, which I should detest you for, if I imagined you capable of persevering in them.'—'Do not imagine it,' cries Jones. 'On my knees I entreat, I implore your confidence; a confidence, which it shall be the business of my life to deserve.'—'Let it then,' said she, 'be the business of some part of your life, to shew me you deserve it. I think I have been explicit enough in assuring you, that when I see you merit my confidence, you will obtain it. After what is past, Sir, can you expect I should take you upon your word?' He replied, 'Don't believe me upon my word; I have a better security, a pledge for my constancy, which it is impossible to see, and to doubt.'—'What is that?' said Sophia, a little surprized. 'I will shew you, my charming angel,' cried Jones, seizing her hand, and carrying her to the glass. 'There; behold it there, in that

that lovely figure, in that face, that shape, those eyes, that mind which shines through those eyes! can the man who shall be in possession of these, be inconstant? Impossible! my Sophia: they would fix a Dorimant, a Lord Rochester. You could not doubt it, if you could see yourself with any eyes but your own! Sophia blushed, and half smiled; but forcing again her brow into a frown, 'If I am to judge,' said she, 'of the future by the past, my image will no more remain in your heart when I am out of your sight, than it will in this glass, when I am out of the room.'—'By Heaven! by all that is sacred!' said Jones, 'it never was out of my heart! The delicacy of your sex cannot conceive the grossness of ours, nor how little one sort of amour has to do with the heart.'—'I will never marry a man,' replied Sophia, very gravely, 'who shall not learn refinement enough, to be as incapable as I am myself, of making such a distinction.'—'I will learn it,' said Jones; 'I have learnt it already. The first moment of hope, that my Sophia might be my wife, taught it me at once; and all the rest of her sex, from that moment, became as little the objects of desire to my sense, as of passion to my heart.'—'Well,' said Sophia, 'the proof of this must be from time.'—'Your situation, Mr. Jones, is now altered; and I assure you, I have great satisfaction in the alteration. You will now want no opportunity of being near me, and convincing me that your mind is altered too.'—'O! my angel,' cries Jones, 'how shall I thank thy goodness? And are you so good to own, that you have a satisfaction in my prosperity? Believe me, believe me, Madam, it is you alone have given a relish to that prosperity, since I owe it to the dear hope—O my Sophia! let it not be a distant one! I will be all obedience to your commands. I will not dare to press any thing farther than you permit me. Yet, let me entreat you to appoint a short trial. O! tell me, when I may expect you will be convinced of what is most solemnly true!'—'When I have gone voluntarily thus far, Mr. Jones,' said she, 'I expect not to be pressed. Nay,

'I will not.'—'O, do not look so unkindly, thus, my Sophia!' cries he. 'I do not, I dare not press you: yet, permit me, at least, once more, to beg you would fix the period. O! consider the impatience of love!'—'A twelvemonth, perhaps,' said she. 'O my Sophia!' cries he, 'you have named an eternity!'—'Perhaps it may be something sooner,' says she: 'I will not be teased. If your passion for me be what I would have it, I think you may now be easy.'—'Easy, Sophia! call not such exulting happiness as mine, by so cold a name! O! transporting thought! am I not assured that the blessed day will come, when I shall call you mine; when fears shall be no more; when I shall have that dear, that vast, that exquisite, extatick delight; of making my Sophia happy!'—'Indeed, Sir,' said she, 'that day is in your own power.'—'O! my dear, my divine angel,' cried he, 'these words have made me mad with joy! But I must, I will thank those dear lips, which have so sweetly pronounced my bliss.' He then caught her in his arms, and kissed her with an ardour he had never ventured before.

At this instant, Western, who had stood some time listening, burst into the room, and with his hunting voice and phrase, cried out, 'To her, boy! to her! go to her! That's it, little honies, O! that's it! Well, what, is it all over? Hath she appointed the day, boy? What, shall it be to-morrow, or next day? It shan't be put off a minute longer, than next day, I am resolved.'—'Let me beseech you, Sir,' says Jones, 'don't let me be the occasion—' 'Beseech mine a—,' cries Western; 'I thought thou hadst been a lad of higher mettle, than to give way to a parcel of maidenish tricks. I tell thee, it is all a flim-flam. Zoodikers! she'd have the wedding to-night, with all her heart.—Would't it not, Sophy?—Come, confess, and be an honest girl for once. What, art dumb? Why dost not speak?'—'Why should I confess, Sir?' says Sophia, 'since it seems you are so well acquainted with my thoughts.'—'That's a good girl,' cries he; 'and dost consent then?'—'No, indeed, Sir,' says Sophia; 'I have given no such consent.'

—‘And wunt nut ha’ un, then, to-morrow, nor next day?’ says Western. ‘Indeed, Sir,’ says she, ‘I have no such intention.’—‘But I can tell thee,’ replied he, ‘why hast not; only because thou dost love to be disobedient, and to plague and vex thy father.’—‘Pray, Sir—’ said Jones, interfering. ‘I tell thee thou art a puppy,’ cries he. ‘When I forbid her, then it was all nothing but fighting and whining, and languishing and wringing: now I am vor thee, she is against thee!—All the spirit of contrary, that’s all. She is above being guided and governed by her father, that is the whole truth on’t. It is only to disoblige and contradict me.’—‘What would my papa have me do?’ cries Sophia. ‘What would I ha’ thee do?’ says he, ‘why, gee un thy hand this moment.’—‘Well, Sir,’ said Sophia, ‘I will obey you.’—‘There is my hand, Mr. Jones.’—‘Well; and will you consent to ha’ un to-morrow morning?’ says Western. ‘I will be obedient to you, Sir,’ cries she. ‘Why then, to-morrow morning be the day,’ cries he. ‘Why then, to-morrow morning shall be the day,’ papa, since you will have it so,’ says Sophia. Jones then fell upon his knees, and kissed her hand, in an agony of joy, while Western began to caper and dance about the room, presently crying out, ‘Where the devil is Allworthy? He is without now, a talking with that d—d Lawyer Dowling, when he should be minding other matters.’ He then sallied out in quest of him, and very opportunely left the lovers to enjoy a few tender minutes alone.

But he soon returned with Allworthy, saying, ‘If you won’t believe me, you may ask her yourself. Hast not gin thy consent, Sophy, to be married to-morrow?’—‘Such are your commands, Sir,’ cries Sophia; ‘and I dare not be guilty of disobedience.’—‘I hope, Madam,’ cries Allworthy, ‘my nephew will merit so much goodness; and will be always as sensible as myself, of the great honour you have done my family: an alliance with so charming and so excellent a young lady, would indeed be an honour to the greatest in England.’—

‘Yes,’ cries Western; ‘but if I had suffered her to stand shilly shally, dilly dally, you might not have had that honour yet awhile: I was forced to use a little fatherly authority to bring her to.’—‘I hope not, Sir,’ cries Allworthy; ‘I hope there is not the least constraint.’—‘Why, there!’ cries Western, ‘you may bid her unsay all again, if you will.’—‘Dost repent heartily of thy promise, dost not, Sophy?’—‘Indeed, papa,’ cries she, ‘I do not repent; nor do I believe I ever shall, of any promise in favour of Mr. Jones.’—‘Then, nephew,’ cries Allworthy, ‘I felicitate you most heartily; for I think you are the happiest of men.—And, Madam, you will give me leave to congratulate you on this joyful occasion: indeed, I am convinced you have bestowed yourself on one who will be sensible of your great merit, and who will at least use his best endeavours to deserve it.’—‘His best endeavours!’ cries Western; ‘that he will, I warrant un. Hark’e, Allworthy, I’ll bet thee five pound to a crown, we have a boy to-morrow nine months: but, pr’ythee, tell me what wut ha’? wut ha’ burgundy, champagne, or what? for, please Jupiter, we’ll make a night on’t.’—‘Indeed, Sir,’ said Allworthy, ‘you must excuse me; both my nephew and I were engaged, before I suspected this near approach of his happiness.’—‘Engaged!’ quoth the squire; ‘never tell me. I won’t part with thee to-night upon any occasion. Shalt sup here, please the Lord Harry.’—‘You must pardon me, my dear neighbour,’ answered Allworthy; ‘I have given a solemn promise, and that you know I never break.’—‘Why, pr’ythee, who art engaged to?’ cries the squire. Allworthy then informed him, as likewise of the company. ‘Odzookers!’ answered the squire, ‘I will go with thee, and so shall Sophy; for I won’t part with thee to-night; and it would be barbarous to part Tom and the girl.’ This offer was presently embraced by Allworthy: and Sophia consented; having first obtained a private promise from her father, that he would not mention a syllable concerning her marriage.

CHAP. THE LAST.

IN WHICH THE HISTORY IS CON-
CLUDED.

YOUNG Nightingale had been that afternoon, by appointment, to wait on his father, who received him much more kindly than he expected: there likewise he met his uncle, who was returned to town in quest of his new-married daughter.

This marriage was the luckiest incident which could have happened to the young gentleman: for these brothers lived in a constant state of contention about the government of their children, both heartily despising the method which each other took. Each of them therefore now endeavoured as much as he could to palliate the offence which his own child had committed, and to aggravate the match of the other. This desire of triumphing over his brother, added to the many arguments which Allworthy had used, so strongly operated on the old gentleman, that he met his son with a smiling countenance, and actually agreed to sup with him that evening at Mrs. Miller's.

As for the other, who really loved his daughter with the most immoderate affection, there was little difficulty in inclining him to a reconciliation. He was no sooner informed by his nephew where his daughter and her husband were, than he declared he would instantly go to her: and when he arrived there, he scarce suffered her to fall upon her knees, before he took her up, and embraced her with a tenderness which affected all who saw him; and in less than a quarter of an hour was as well reconciled to both her and her husband, as if he had himself joined their hands.

In this situation were affairs, when Mr. Allworthy and his company arrived to compleat the happiness of Mrs. Miller, who no sooner saw Sophia, than she guessed every thing that had happened; and so great was her friendship to Jones, that it added not a few transports to those she felt on the happiness of her own daughter.

There have not, I believe, been many instances of a number of people met together, where every one was so per-

fectly happy, as in this company. Amongst whom, the father of young Nightingale enjoyed the least perfect content; for, notwithstanding his affection for his son; notwithstanding the authority and the arguments of Allworthy, together with the other motive mentioned before, he could not so entirely be satisfied with his son's choice; and perhaps the presence of Sophia herself tended a little to aggravate and heighten his concern, as a thought now and then suggested itself, that his son might have had that lady, or some such other: not that any of the charms which adorned either the person or mind of Sophia, created the uneasiness; it was the contents of her father's coffers which set his heart a longing. These were the charms which he could not bear to think his son had sacrificed to the daughter of Mrs. Miller.

The brides were both very pretty women; but so totally were they eclipsed by the beauty of Sophia, that had they not been two of the best tempered girls in the world, it would have raised some envy in their breasts; for neither of their husbands could long keep his eyes from Sophia; who sat at the table like a queen receiving homage, or rather, like a superior being receiving adoration from all around her: but it was an adoration which they gave, not which she exacted; for she was as much distinguished by her modesty and affability, as by all her other perfections.

The evening was spent in much true mirth. All were happy; but those the most, who had been most unhappy before. Their former sufferings and fears gave such a relish to their felicity, as even love and fortune, in their fullest flow, could not have given without the advantage of such a comparison. Yet, as great joy, especially after a sudden change and revolution of circumstances, is apt to be silent, and dwells rather in the heart than on the tongue, Jones and Sophia appeared the least merry of the whole company; which Western observed with great impatience, often crying out to them, 'Why do'st not talk, boy! why do'st look so grave! —Hast lost thy tongue, girl! Drink another glass of wine; sha't drink another glass.' And the more to enliven her, he would sometimes sing a

merry song, which bore some relation to matrimony, and the loss of a maidenhead: nay, he would have proceeded so far on that topick, as to have driven her out of the room, if Mr. Allworthy had not checked him, sometimes by looks, and once or twice by a 'Fie! Mr. Western!' He began, indeed, once to debate the matter, and assert his right to talk to his own daughter as he thought fit; but as nobody seconded him, he was soon reduced to order.

Notwithstanding this little restraint, he was so pleased with the cheerfulness and good-humour of the company, that he insisted on their meeting the next day at his lodgings. They all did so; and the lovely Sophia, who was now in private become a bridle too, officiated as the mistress of the ceremonies; or, in the polite phrase, did the honours of the table. She had that morning given her hand to Jones, in the chapel at Doctors Commons; where Mr. Allworthy, Mr. Western, and Mrs. Miller, were the only persons present.

Sophia had earnestly desired her father, that no others of the company, who were that day to dine with him, should be acquainted with her marriage. The same secrecy was enjoined to Mrs. Miller, and Jones undertook for Allworthy. This somewhat reconciled the delicacy of Sophia to the publick entertainment, which, in compliance with her father's will, she was obliged to go to, greatly against her own inclinations. In confidence of this secrecy, she went through the day pretty well; till the squire, who was now advanced into the second bottle, could contain his joy no longer; but, filling out a bumper, drank a health to the bride. The health was immediately pledged by all present, to the great confusion of our poor blushing Sophia, and the great concern of Jones upon her account. To say truth, there was not a person present made wiser by this discovery; for Mrs. Miller had whispered it to her daughter, her daughter to her husband, her husband to his sister, and she to all the rest.

Sophia now took the first opportunity of withdrawing with the ladies, and the squire sat in to his cups; in which he was, by degrees, deserted by all the company, except the uncle of

young Nightingale, who loved his bottle as well as Western himself. These two therefore sat stoutly to it, during the whole evening, and long after that happy hour which had surrendered the charming Sophia to the eager arms of her enraptured Jones.

Thus, reader, we have at length brought our history to a conclusion; in which, to our great pleasure, though contrary, perhaps, to thy expectation, Mr. Jones appears to be the happiest of all human kind: for what happiness this world affords equal to the possession of such a woman as Sophia, I sincerely own I have never yet discovered.

As to the other persons who have made any considerable figure in this history, as some may desire to know a little more concerning them, we will proceed, in as few words as possible, to satisfy their curiosity.

Allworthy hath never yet been prevailed upon to see Blifil; but he hath yielded to the importunity of Jones, backed by Sophia, to settle 200 l. a year upon him; to which Jones hath privately added a third. Upon this income he lives, in one of the northern counties, about 200 miles distant from London, and lays up 200 l. a year out of it, in order to purchase a seat in the next parliament from a neighbouring borough, which he has bargained for with an attorney there. He is also lately turned methodist, in hopes of marrying a very rich widow of that sect, whose estate lies in that part of the kingdom.

Square died soon after he writ the before-mentioned letter; and as to Thwackum, he continues at his vicarage. He hath made many fruitless attempts to regain the confidence of Allworthy, or to ingratiate himself with Jones, both of whom he flatters to their faces, and abuses behind their backs. But in his stead, Mr. Allworthy hath lately taken Mr. Abraham Adams into his house; of whom Sophia is grown immoderately fond, and declares he shall have the tuition of her children.

Mrs. Fitzpatrick is separated from her husband, and retains the little remains of her fortune. She lives in reputation at the polite end of the town, and is so good an economist, that she spends three times the income of her fortune, without running in debt. She maintains

maintains a perfect intimacy with the lady of the Irish peer; and in acts of friendship to her, repays all the obligations she owes to her husband.

Mrs. Western was soon reconciled to her niece Sophia, and had spent two months together with her in the country. Lady Bellafton made the latter a formal visit at her return to town, where she behaved to Jones as to a perfect stranger, and with great civility wished him joy on his marriage.

Mr. Nightingale hath purchased an estate for his son in the neighbourhood of Jones, where the young gentleman, his lady, Mrs. Miller, and her little daughter reside, and the most agreeable intercourse subsists between the two families.

As to those of lower account, Mrs. Waters returned into the country, had a pension of 60*l.* a year settled upon her by Mr. Allworthy, and is married to Parson Supple; on whom, at the instance of Sophia, Western hath bestowed a considerable living.

Black George hearing the discovery that had been made, run away, and was never since heard of; and Jones bestowed the money on his family; but not in equal proportions, for Molly had much the greatest share.

As for Partridge, Jones hath settled 50*l.* a year on him; and he hath again set up a school, in which he meets with much better encouragement than formerly; and there is now a treaty of marriage on foot, between him and Miss Molly Seagrind, which, through the mediation of Sophia, is likely to take effect.

We now return to take leave of Mr. Jones and Sophia; who, within two days after their marriage, attended Mr. Western and Mr. Allworthy into the country. Western hath resigned his family seat, and the greater part of his estate to his son-in-law, and hath retired to a lesser house of his, in another part of the country, which is better for hunting. Indeed, he is often as a visitant with Mr. Jones, who, as well as his daughter, hath an infinite delight in doing every thing in their power to please him: and this desire

of theirs is attended with such success, that the old gentleman declares he was never happy in his life till now. He hath here a parlour and anti-chamber to himself, where he gets drunk with whom he pleases; and his daughter is still as ready as formerly to play to him whenever he desires it; for Jones hath assured her, that as next to pleasing her, one of his highest satisfactions is to contribute to the happiness of the old man, so the great duty which she expresses and performs to her father, renders her almost equally dear to him, with the love which she bestows on himself.

Sophia hath already produced him two fine children, a boy and a girl, of whom the old gentleman is so fond, that he spends much of his time in the nursery; where he declares the tattling of his little grand-daughter, who is above a year and a half old, is sweeter musick than the finest cry of dogs in England.

Allworthy was likewise greatly liberal to Jones on the marriage, and hath omitted no instance of shewing his affection to him and his lady, who loves him as a father. Whatever in the nature of Jones had a tendency to vice, has been corrected by continual conversation with this good man, and by his union with the lovely and virtuous Sophia. He hath also, by reflection on his past follies, acquired a discretion and prudence very uncommon in one of his lively parts.

To conclude; as there are not to be found a worthier man and woman than this fond couple, so neither can any be imagined more happy. They preserve the purest and tenderest affection for each other; an affection daily increased and confirmed by mutual endearments, and mutual esteem: nor is their conduct towards their relations and friends less amiable, than towards one another; and such is their condescension, their indulgence, and their beneficence to those below them, that there is not a neighbour, a tenant, or a servant, who doth not most gratefully bless the day when Mr. Jones was married to his Sophia.

